आ: 7/137

MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR

आम्नाय-ग्रन्थालय,
भरतनिधि, करौंदी
वाराणसी-5

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ग्रन्थालय
दी, वाराणसी-५
आ: 7/137

MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR

JUSTICE T. L. VENKATARAMA AIYAR held in succession, the offices of Judge of the Madras High Court, Judge of the Supreme Court, and Chairman, of the Law Commission, with great distinction.

Son of an eminent Sanskrit Pandit and poet, Mahamahopadhyaya Lakshmana Suri, he is himself a scholar in Sanskrit. He was trained in classical Music by his cousin, the great musician and composer, Muthiah Bhagavatar, and is one of the acknowledged authorities on the theory and practice of Music. He has specialised in the compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar, of which he possesses a large repertoire. He presided over the Annual Conference of the experts of the Madras Music Academy in 1944 and was awarded the title of *Sangita Kalanidhi*.

आम्नाय-ग्रन्थालय,
भरतनिधि, करौंदी
वाराणसी-5

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MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR

T. L. VENKATARAMA AIYAR

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FOREWORD

THIS COUNTRY has produced remarkable personalities in every walk of life since the earliest times. Our history is crowded with the names of outstanding persons who have made notable contributions whether in art, literature, politics, science or other fields. Some are household words. There are many whose names are familiar but about whose life and work little is known to the public. There are others about whom people know little but who have made remarkable achievements.

The history of a country is, to a great extent, the history of its great men and women. They have moulded it and built it up. It is essential for the ordinary citizen to know something about these personalities in order to understand how our country has evolved.

From ancient times music occupies the most important place in our cultural history and evolution, and an understanding of Indian culture would be incomplete without an acquaintance with its great musical tradition. Therefore, the lives of the great figures, who built up this noble tradition, is essential for understanding our cultural history.

Amongst the rare composers, who formed the great edifice of Indian Music, Muthuswami Dikshitar occupies an eminent place. Our music is divided into two styles known as the Hindustani and the Carnatic. In the Carnatic tradition Dikshitar occupies a prominent place side by side with Tyagaraja and Shama Shastri. He is one of the great trinity. There are of course one or two other equally eminent names in the annals of Carnatic

Music like Purandar Das and Swati Tirunal. For understanding the contribution of Carnatic Music, study of the lives of Muthuswami Dikshitar and other great composers is highly necessary.

No more appropriate person could be found than T. L. Venkatarama Aiyar for writing the life of Dikshitar. An eminent lawyer and judge, he is as eminent in music. Learned in the theory and practice of music, he is a devotee and a great student of Muthuswami Dikshitar. He has written for the National Biography series this life sketch of Dikshitar based upon all available material. This excellent pen picture of Dikshitar and his work in Music will greatly help the common reader with more precise knowledge of his life and compositions as far as it is possible to get from various sources and prevailing traditions.

New Delhi
November 8, 1968.

B. V. KESKAR

PREFACE

MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR has been honoured in the world of Carnatic Music for now more than a century as a saintly-composer and as one of the Classical trinity. There is no contemporary record of his life and there has grown around him and Sri Tyagaraja a large body of anecdotes and stories of miracles. But it should be borne in mind that it is for the aesthetic excellence, and spiritual loftiness of the *kritis* of these composers that we pay homage to them, and that a biography is valuable only as revealing to us the greatness of the composer and as throwing ligh ton his compositions. I have accordingly narrated in this biography only those incidents and anecdotes which are supported by ancient and reliable tradition or by the contents of the kritis themselves.

I had learnt music in the traditional mode under my cousin the late Dr. L. Muthiah Bhagavatar who was not merely an eminent musician but a great composer also. On 14th May 1931 an event happened which profoundly influenced my knowledge of music. On that date I met at Koilpati near Ettayyapuram a musician belonging to the family of Dikshitar. Baluswami Dikshitar, the younger brother of Muthuswami Dikshitar, had no son and so he adopted his own daughter's son. He is Subbarama Dikshitar. It is no exaggeration to say that Subbarama Dikshitar is the most outstanding musicologist during the last hundred years. He was a repository of traditional music and has published under the auspices of the Ettayyapuram Samsthanam a musical treatise called *Sangita Sampradaya*

Pradarshini. This is easily the most valuable book on the science of Carnatic Music and it is the knowledge obtained from this book that forms the foundation of the works written by later writers. Subbarama Dikshitar had a son named Muthuswami Dikshitar, familiarly known as Ambi Dikshitar. I met Ambi Dikshitar on the 14th May 1931 at Koilpatti and listened to his recital of the kritis of Muthuswami Dikshitar. Not merely were many of his kritis generally unknown, but the style of the Music was something which was new and refreshing. The songs were all in Vilambakala and full of Gamakas. I was anxious to learn them and arranged to settle him in Madras and it is from him that I learnt first hand the kritis of Dikshitar. He also mentioned many matters concerning the life of Dikshitar as a matter of old family tradition. The present work is very largely based upon what I had heard from him, supplemented by what can be gathered from the kritis. It is my view that to restore classical music to the highest level of its purity and beauty it is necessary that the kritis of Muthuswami Dikshitar should be learned and rendered very much more than they are at present.

Madras
August 31, 1968

T. L. VENKATARAMA AIYAR

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CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY AND EARLY LIFE

THERE ARE in the history of nations certain periods when there is cultural efflorescence or to use a word which has now come into vogue, explosion, when art and literature strike new forms, and rise to new heights. There was such a period in the history of South India, commencing about the middle of the eighteenth Century and lasting for about a hundred years. This is rightly regarded as the golden age of classical Carnatic Music. Many were the eminent musicians who flourished during this period, and many the composers of classical Carnatic Music. Of them three stand out pre-eminent, towering above the rest, and are popularly known as the Trinity of Carnatic Music. They are Syama Sastri born in 1762, Tyagaraja born in 1767, and Muthuswami Dikshitar born in 1775. For outstanding beauties in the handling of Ragas and Talas, their compositions form a class by themselves, and among them, those of Syama Ṣastri excel in intricate rhythmic phrases (Tala), those of Tyagaraja in the happy blend of emotion and melody, (Bhava), and those of Muthuswami Dikshitar in their richness in the portraiture of melody forms (Raga).

In the beginning of the eighteenth Century there lived at a place called Virinchipuram in South India, a Brahmin of the Kasyapa Gotra, called, Venkateswara Dikshitar. He is the grandfather of Muthuswami Dikshitar. His wife was called Bhagirati. To them was born in 1735 a son called Ramaswami. While he was still a boy an event of considerable importance to the family happened. The political condition of the region in which Virinchipuram is situated was during this period very unsettled. In 1742, under threat of attack by the enemy heralded by an advance of cavalry corps, there was an exodus of population on a large scale. Venkateswara Dikshitar was one of those who then left the place. At that time the Cauvery Delta was under the enlightened rule of the Maharashtra Kings of Tanjore and there was comparative peace and plenty in that part of the country. Venkateswara Dikshitar accordingly migrated to the State of Tanjore. There is near Madhyarjunam, on the banks of the Cauvery, a village called Govindapuram, named after its founder, Govinda Dikshitar the eminent statesman, Sanskrit scholar and philosopher, who was the Minister in charge of the administration of the State during the reigns of the first Naik Kings of Tanjore. There Venkateswara Dikshitar settled down. Sometime about 1751 he and his wife died, thus leaving Ramaswami to work out his own future.

Ramaswami had been undergoing training in Veda Adhyayana. He was gifted with a rich and musical voice and had a natural bent for music. His discerning friends, therefore, advised him to take to the study of Music. There were, at that time, many eminent musicians in Tanjore, who enjoyed royal patronage. Virabhadrayya was one of them and to him Ramaswami went for learning music. Virabhadrayya was impressed by his talents and took him as his disciple, and gave him a thorough training in classical music on traditional lines. Ramaswami returned to Govindapuram fully qualified to give concerts.

There was, at that time, living at Madhyarjunam, a Vainika called Venkata Vaidianatha Dikshitar, who belonged to the family of Govinda Dikshitar and Venkatamakhi. Govinda Dikshitar, the Minister of the Naik Kings of Tanjore, was also eminent as a Musicologist, and is the author of a well-known work on the science of Music, *Sangita Sudha*. Venkatamakhi, the famous author of the *Chaturdandi Prakasika* and the Panini of modern Carnatic music, was one of his sons. Venkata Vaidianatha who was a repository of all this learning was acknowledged to be one of the greatest authorities of his time on the science of music. Taking the view that no recital of music could be perfect unless it is backed by a knowledge of Sangita Sastra, Ramaswami Dikshitar went to him for acquiring a knowledge of the theory of Music. Venkata Vaidianatha taught him the science of Music and in particular the scheme of 72 Melas and Janya Ragas as propounded by Venkatamakhi.

Ramaswami Dikshitar then settled down at Tiruvarur. His reputation as a concert Vidwan spread rapidly and he was the recipient of honours and emoluments from the King of Tanjore and from the landed aristocracy. In recognition of his knowledge of music, he was entrusted with the work of organising the recitals of Nagaswaram in the temple of Tyagarajaswami. It was he who invented Raga Hamsadhwani, which has now an all-India stature. He is besides a notable composer of Kritis of various kinds, Lakshana and Lakshya, such as Varnams, Darus, Kirtanas and Ragamalikas. Indeed the compositions of Ramaswami Dikshitar would have been better known and commanded greater popularity, had it not been that they have been overshadowed by the greater splendour of the Kritis of his son Muthuswami Dikshitar.

Ramaswami Dikshitar was childless for a long time and a holy personage whom he consulted told him that he would get progeny only by the grace of the Devi, and advised him to worship Goddess Balambika enshrined in the temple at a place called Vaidiswarankoil. Dikshitar had already been initiated in the Sri Vidya cult by a great Sanyasin called Chidambaranathaswami and so he decided to perform Mandala Puja to Devi Balambika according to the Tantric mode. He accordingly went to Vaidiswarankoil along with his wife Subbammal and spent 40 days there, performing "Avarana" Pujas, and conducting Bhajanas before the Goddess. On the last day, it is said, the Devi appeared before him in a dream and presented him with a *Muktaharam* (Pearl necklace). Dikshitar was amazed, and related the dream to the elders of the place, who interpreted it as meaning that his prayer had been granted by the Devi, and that the gem (Muktha) of a son would soon be born to him. He then left for his home at Tiruvarur.

Within a year thereafter the great expectations of Ramaswami Dikshitar came to be realised. It was in the month of Phalgun that the great event took place. At that time the annual Vasanthotsava was being celebrated with great eclat in the temple of Sri Tyagarajaswami. The entire town was ringing with the chants of Vedic Mantras and the Music of the Nagaswaram and of dances, and of the fireworks. It was in this atmosphere that a son was born to Ramaswami Dikshitar. Regarding him as the boon of the Devi Balambika, Dikshitar named him, after Lord Karthikeya in Vaidiswarankoil, as

Muthukumaraswami or, more shortly, as Muthuswami. It was significant that the child was born in the Krittika Nakshatra, the constellation of Lord Subrahmanya. There was further the fact that the Devi presented Dikshitar with a *Muktaharam* when she appeared in a dream to him at Vaidiswarankoil, and "Muthu" in Tamil is equivalent to 'Mukta' in Sanskrit.

The story of the dream and the grant of boon by the Devi Balambika is a matter of tradition in the family of Dikshitar. An allusion to this might be read in the well-known Kriti of Muthuswami Dikshitar beginning with the words "Bhaja Re Re Chitta Balambikam". It is a song which he composed in praise of Devi Balambika, when he visited Her shrine and therein he says: "O Mind ! Do worship Balambika, who grants all boons to her devotees. She is pleased with music with Bhava, Raga and Tala. She grants the prayers of her Bhaktas. She is the mother of Muthukumara, who is an embodiment of Guru-Guha, who is protector of his devotees."[1] Adapting it to the context it might freely be rendered thus: "She was pleased with the Music (of Ramaswami Dikshitar) rendered with Bhava, Raga and Tala. She granted him his prayer (for a son). And her boon was Guru-Guha (that is the Mudra of Muthuswami Dikshitar in his songs) who took the form of Muthukumaraswami (Muthuswami)."

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[1] भावरागतालमोदिनीं
भक्ताभीष्टप्रदायिनीम् ।
सेवकजनपालनगुरुगुह-रूपमुच्छु कुमारजननीम् ।
भज रे रे चित्त वालाम्विकां
भक्तकल्पलतिकां काम् ।।

The grace of the Devi was indeed plentiful. After Muthuswami, three more children were born to Ramaswami Dikshitar—two sons called Chinnaswami and Baluswami and a daughter who was significantly named "Balambika".

The history of the boyhood of Muthuswami may shortly be summed up as one of dedication to study. Ramaswami Dikshitar desired that his son should become learned in the Vedas and Sastras, and so apart from arranging for a course in Vedadhyayana, he put him under a learned Pandit for study of classical Sanskrit. Muthuswami was extraordinarily quick in his understanding and it was not long before he acquired mastery over the Kavyas and Alankaras. He was also taught Siddhanta Kaumudi, and became proficient in Vyakarana (Grammar). All this is reflected in his compositions, which reveal a marvellous command of Sanskrit.

The musical education of Muthuswami Dikshitar is of even greater interest to us. Ramaswami Dikshitar was, it has been already stated, not only an eminent musician but also a learned musicologist. He gave intensive training to his son both in the practice and in the theory of Music. He taught him on the one hand practical music on the lines which had been followed in Carnatic music ever since the days of Sri Purandaradas and on the other, theory of Music not merely as laid down by ancient and medieval writers, but also as propounded by writers on modern Carnatic music, such as Venkatamakhi. Particular mention must be made of the fact that the Lakshana Gitas and Prabandhas of Venkatamakhi occupied an important place in the education of Muthuswami Dikshitar. This proficiency in Music, both practical and theoretical, is one of the factors which has played a dominant role in the evolution of the music of Muthuswami Dikshitar. There is also another factor which requires to be particularly noted. Muthuswami Dikshitar was both a vocalist and a Vainika. These two types of music have their distinctive characteristics and their combination makes for a new style, which has charms of its own. Some of the distinguishing features of the Music of Muthuswami Dikshitar are attributable to his having been a Vainika-cum-Vocalist. This is a matter which can more appropriately be dealt with when considering his Music.

While Muthuswami was still in his boyhood, an event of great importance in the history of the family happened. There is near Madras a place called Manali. It was in those days a prominent principality. Its proprietor at this time was one Muthukrishna Mudaliar, who was a religious-minded man, and a munificent patron of arts. In the course of a pilgrimage tour he visited Tiruvarur, and while he stood before the shrine of Tyagarajaswami he listened to a Bhajana which was being performed by Ramaswami Dikshitar. He was so much moved by it that he invited him to go over with him to Manali as his Samsthana Vidwan. Ramaswami Dikshitar agreed, and shifted to Manali with his family and settled down there.

Ramaswami Dikshitar had a glorious time of it at Manali. His achievements as a musician attracted wide attention in the region and brought him considerable fame. Muthukrishna Mudaliar treated him with great respect and loaded him with gifts. After the death of Muthukrishna Mudaliar, which happened soon after, Venkatakrishna Mudaliar, who succeeded him, was even more liberal in his patronage of art and Ramaswami

Dikshitar received special honours from him for dedicating to him a Ragamalika set to 108 Ragas and Talas. Venkatakrishna Mudaliar was also a Dubash of the East India Company at Madras and that entailed frequent visits by him to Fort St. George. There he used to listen to tunes of Western Music played on Band and often took with him Muthuswami and his younger brothers to listen to them. This association of the Dikshitar family with European Music had far-reaching consequences on the development of Music in South India. Muthuswami picked up many of the melodies played on the Band, and later in life, acting on the suggestion of a Col. Browne who was in the service of the East India Company and who wanted to familiarise English tunes to the Indian public, Dikshitar gave them a Sanskrit sahitya (words). Some fifty of such songs have come down to us. To give an example, there is the well-known melody, "God Save The King". The Sanskrit sahitya substituted by Dikshitar in the place of the English words is addressed to the Devi and prays for Her protection.[1] Listening to the sahitya of Dikshitar, one gets the impression that the old tune in its English trappings has, in its brilliant and attractive Sanskrit costumes, entered on a new life of beauty and grandeur. The sahitya of the other songs is similarly in praise of the Deities of the Hindu pantheon. They have all of them a charm of their own, and can be, and are, taught as light tit-bits to beginners in the study of classical Carnatic Music. But one must, however, be careful not to over-emphasise the importance of these songs. They have, on a scientific assessment, no real place in the scheme of classical Indian Music, because Raga and Tala form the warp and woof in the fabric of that Music, and these songs bear no relation to them.

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[1] संततं पाहि मां संगीतश्यामले सर्वाधारे
जननि चिन्तितार्थप्रदे चिद्रूपिणि शिवे
श्रीगुरुगुहपूजिते शिवमोहाकारे ।
सततं पाहि माम् ।

A more solid benefit derived from the association of the Dikshitar family with Western Music is the adoption of Violin as a regular concert instrument. Violin is not one of the instruments known to classical Indian Music. It has no doubt been claimed that it was at one time in use in our Music, and was known as Dhanur-Vina. Without entering into a controversy over it, it is sufficient to say that even if it was at one time in use in India it had long long ago faded out of existence, and there is no living tradition about it. What is certain is that when Ramaswami Dikshitar and his sons went to Fort St. George and listened to the Orchestra played by the Band, they were impressed by the important role assigned to the Violin in the concert and the idea struck then that it could be used on the lines of Vina, as an accompaniment. As Muthuswami was playing Vina, it was decided to entrust Baluswami with the task of learning to play on the Violin. It is said that Venkatakrishna Mudaliar himself engaged a European tutor to teach Violin to Baluswami. After three years of training, Baluswami acquired a mastery over the instrument and he was able to accompany Muthuswami in a Vina concert. Thus what was begun as an experiment turned out to be a great success. This had the effect of revolutionising the pattern of concerts in South India. Vadivelu, one of the Tanjore brothers, and a Sishya of Muthuswami Dikshitar became an adept in the art of playing on Violin and when he became a Samsthana Vidwan in the court of Maharaja Swati Tirunal, he introduced it in Travancore. Tirukodikaval Krishnaier, who was the leading Violin artist in his day was of the Sishya parampara of Muthuswami Dikshitar and was responsible for raising the status of the Violin as an instrument suitable for Carnatic Music and ever since, no concert of classical Music in South India is considered to be complete without Violin. It may be noted, that Violin does not seem to enjoy the same status in Hindustani Music.

An event now happened which had a profound influence on the life of Muthuswami Dikshitar. It has been already mentioned that Chidambaranatha Yogi was the Guru who initiated Ramaswami Dikshitar in Sri Vidya Cult, and taught him the Tantric mode of worship. Apart from this he was a great Yogi and Vedantin, and was honoured all over the country not only as a Sanyasi, but also as a sage and a philosopher. He started on a pilgrimage tour to Benaras. On his way from the South he stopped at Madras and coming to know of his visit Ramaswami Dikshitar who was his sishya, invited him for a Bhiksha. Chidambaranathaswami agreed and visited Dikshitar in his home at Manali. Venkatakrishna Mudaliar welcomed him with all honours and made all arrangements for his accommodation. Muthuswami Dikshitar and his brothers were always in attendance on him and used to sing when he was performing puja. After some days, the Swami wanted to resume his tour. Then Ramaswami Dikshitar and all the members of his family prostrated before him, and asked for his blessings.

Chidambaranathaswami then asked Ramaswami Dikshitar, "I am going to make a request to you. Will you grant it?"

Ramaswami replied "Why make a request ? You can command me. You are a Sanyasin and my Guru." "Will you grant what I ask you" said Chidambaranathaswami again.

"Yes certainly" replied Ramaswami Dikshitar.

"Then I want you to send your son Muthuswami to accompany me as my sishya during my tour."

These words fell like a bombshell in the ears of Ramaswami Dikshitar, who was stunned and sat down speechless for some time. When he recovered he saw the Swamiji looking at him for an answer. "Swami", he said, "Muthuswami was born to me late in life after endless prayers, and penance. Where is Kasi, and where are we ? How can we live without seeing him ?"

"If you are not going to keep your promise" replied Chidambaranathaswami, "say so and I shall be gone."

"I entreat you, my Guru, to relieve me from my promise", so saying Ramaswami Dikshitar prostrated before the Swamiji. Chidambaranathaswami was about to rise, when Venkatakrishna Mudaliar stepped in for getting the blessings of the Swami. Finding out what had happened, he told Ramaswami Dikshitar "Sir, why are you perturbed ? Dasaratha was nervous when Viswamitra wanted to take young Rama with him to the forest. At last he sent him on the advice of Vasishta. Did not Rama derive immense good by going with Viswamitra ? When the Swami wants to take Muthuswami with him as his sishya it must be only for conferring benefit on him. Sir, keep your word. Do not hesitate. Send him. It will all be for your good."

Ramaswami Dikshitar had to yield. Muthuswami was handed over to Chidambaranathaswami, who blessed Ramaswami Dikshitar and the members of his family, and Venkatakrishna Mudaliar and started on his tour along with Muthuswami.

CHAPTER II

KASI

A JOURNEY to Kasi from South India was in those days, quite an ordeal. A long distance had to be covered, for the most part, on foot, and what is more, the route was beset with perils from dacoits, and wild beasts. Therefore pilgrims used to assemble in groups, and then travel by slow stages visiting the sacred shrines on the way, and resting in Chatrams. A journey to Kasi would take several months and hence the saying "one can be sure of a person who goes to Kasi, only when he safely returns." It was this thought that oppressed Ramaswami Dikshitar when he hesitated to send his son to Kasi along with the Swami.

But Muthuswami Dikshitar had not to suffer much of a hardship. Chidambaranathaswami was fairly well-known all over the country, and was greeted with reverence wherever he went. Travelling under such auspices, Muthuswami had a happy time of it. Starting from Madras the Yogi and Muthuswami Dikshitar travelled to the North, visiting the sacred spots, and temples on the way, and reached Kasi and there they lived together for a period of about five or six years.

It is this period that must be reckoned the most important in the shaping of Muthuswami Dikshitar. Under the guidance and tutelage of Chidambaranatha Yogi he lived a life which was deeply religious and highly spiritual. The Yogi initiated him in the Sri Vidya Cult, and gave him Upadesa of Shodashakshari Mantram, and trained him in the Tantric form of worship. He taught him the practice of Yoga, and Vedanta on the lines propounded by Sankaracharya. The daily mode of life of Dikshitar at Kasi was that he rose early and had his bath in the holy Ganga and then practised Yoga. Then he would perform Puja for the Devi, and then take lessons in Vedanta from Chidambaranatha Yogi. He would then visit the temple, and offer worship to the Deities, Visweswara, Annapurna and Visalakshi. Returning to his quarters, he would sit before his Guru, when he was performing mid-day Puja, and recite Vedas, and sing, and play on Vina. In the evening again he would visit the temple, and after worshipping the Deities, he would attend on the night-Puja of the Yogi, and perform Bhajana. Such a life pursued over years during the formative period of the life of a person must necessarily discipline his mind and his intellect and turn him on to the path of Dharma, of Bhakti and Gnana. That is what had happened to Dikshitar, and it is fully reflected in his compositions.

During the period of their stay at Kasi, the Yogi and his Sishya must have visited several sacred shrines in Northern India. No record of such tours has come down to us, but we get a glimpse of them in the Kritis of Dikshitar. When he later on turned a composer, he recalled to his mind the temples in the North where he had worshipped, and wrote compositions in praise of the Deities there. A few of these pieces have come down to us, and they give us valuable information. There are, as is to be expected, songs in praise of Visweswara, Visalakshi, Annapurna, and Kala Bhairava all at Benaras. There is also a piece in praise of the Ganga at Kasi. Of particular interest is a song on Pasupatiswara, who is described as "Worshipped by the King of Western Kashmir".[1] Whether it means that at the time of the visit of Dikshitar the Ruler of Kashmir had come there for worship it is not possible to say. But of this one can be certain that the song has reference to the shrine of Pasupatiswara at Kathmandu. Then again there is a song on Sri Satyanarayana, and He is described as gracing the resplendent Badrinath.[2] It can clearly be inferred from this that Chidambaranatha Yogi, following the example of Sankaracharya, made a tour to the shrines at Kathmandu and Badri, and that Dikshitar accompanied him in the tour.

It is again to be noted that both these songs are cast in Raga Siva Pantuvarali, which is the 45th Mela in the scheme of Venkatamakhi (now called Subha Pantuvarali) and that corresponds to Miyanki Todi of the Hindustani Music. In the days of Muthuswami Dikshitar, Siva Pantuvarali was rather an obscure and neglected Raga in the South and even now the position has not very much changed. But Miyanki Todi is one of the major hits of the Hindustani System, and it is therefore appropriate that Dikshitar should have used this Raga in both these songs. Indeed in the kriti on Pasupatiswara he describes the Lord as having a liking for Siva-Pantuvarali Raga.[3] That suggests that Miyanki Todi must have been largely used in Bhajanas before the Deity.

That takes us on to a topic, which is of the greatest interest in the study of the composition of Muthuswami Dikshitar, as to how far they were influenced by the

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[1] पश्चिमकाश्मीरराजविनुतम् ।

[2] भासमानबदरीस्थितम् ।

[3] शुकशौनकादिघोषितशिवपंतुवरालि रागप्रियम् ।

Hindustani Music. It should be remembered in this connection that though the Hindustani and Carnatic systems of Music present distinctive features and may strike one at the first blush as alien to each other, the fact is that they are branches of the same system of music. They are both derived from the same source, and based on the concepts of Raga and Tala, which are peculiar to the Music of India. The theory of music is the same in both the systems, and the treatises in which they are expounded are common to both. It is true that they have developed each its own individuality but the difference is merely dialectical in character. In the days of Venkatamakhi these differences had not become so pronounced. He was himself a master of Hindustani Music and had Sishyas belonging to that school of Music. The Carnatic system had, before his days, adopted and assimilated several Hindustani Ragas and Venkatamakhi had composed Lakshana Gitas on them. After his time, owing to the prevailing political conditions, the two systems began to lose touch with each other, and to develop on independent lines, and that has resulted in the accentuation of differences. For the same reason, the Hindustani Ragas which had been earlier absorbed in the Carnatic system lost, during this period, some of their original features, and instead adopted new sancharas, thereby taking a somewhat different complexion. That was the condition of Hindustani Music in South India during the later half of the 18th Century.

Muthuswami Dikshitar was brought up in the tradition of Venkatamakhi, and the Hindustani Music strongly appealed to him. During his stay at Kasi he had an excellent opportunity of listening to Hindustani Music in all its purity and he fully availed himself of the same for learning it. Except when engaged in the service of God or of the Guru, he devoted himself to the practice of music in general and of the Hindustani Ragas in particular and acquired a mastery over them. This has had a profound influence on his music and this can be seen not only in his handling of the Hindustani Ragas but also in the portrayal in general of all ragas. It is has been already stated that some Hindustani Ragas had been adopted in Carnatic Music, but that they had suffered some change during the post-Venkatamakhi period. In the compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar they regain their original purity and form, and that is because, having learnt them first hand in Benaras, he was able to present a picture true to the Hindustani version though he was unable wholly to discard some of their accretions in the South. To give an illustration, Raga Sarang of the Hindustani system had been adopted in Carnatic Music, under the name of Brindavani. Such changes in the names of Ragas are not unusual, as for example in the case of Malkhans—Hindolam, but they do not affect the substance of the melodies. Venkatamakhi has a Gita in Brindavani Raga, beginning with the words "Ambarakesa Shambu Re." The lakshana of the Raga as handled by him is, Arohana—*sa ri ma pa ni sa* and Avarohana *sa ni pa ma ri sa*, and it is the same as that of the Carnatic Raga, Madhyamavati, except that it takes also Kakali (Tivra) Nishada and has some characteristic Sancharas. The lakshana of Brindavani in this Gita conforms fully to that of Sarang in the Hindustani system. After the days of Venkatamakhi the Raga, which came to be called Brindavanasaranga, combining the names in both the systems, underwent some changes. There was an occasional use of Sadharna (Komal) Gandhara. That is not of much consequence. But the Kakali Nishada Prayoga and the characteristic sancharas came to be dropped and this completely altered the complexion of the Raga. All this was set right by Muthuswami Dikshitar. He has composed a number of songs in Brindavanasaranga "Rangapura Vihara", "Soundararajam", "Swaminathena" and except for the very slight use of Sadharna Gandhara which can be even omitted without any detriment to the pieces, his rendering of the Raga is precisely the same as that of Sarang in Hindustani.

Turning next to the other Hindustani Ragas handled by Dikshitar, he has composed a number of pieces in Raga Yamuna Kalyani (Emam of Hindustani Music) and among them special mention must be made of the song "Jambupathe Mam Pahi", which, for its richness of Ragabhava and grandeur, stands unrivalled. His song in Hamir Kalyani, "Parimala Ranganatham" is again a brilliant composition, bringing out impressively the features of the Raga, as rendered in Hindustani Music, though incidentally it must be mentioned that there are in it touches of the Hindustani Raga Kedar, which had for centuries been adopted as part of it in South Indian Music. Jaya Jaya Vanti is another Hindustani Raga which had been adopted in Carnatic Music under the name of Dwijavani. The song "Chetas-Sri Balakrishnam" of Dikshitar in this Raga is a magnificent edifice giving a full view of the Raga in all its aspects and is rightly regarded as the most impressive song in that Raga. There is a Raga called Malava Panchama, in which Dikshitar has composed a piece, "Vasudeva-mupasmahe". It looks as if this s the same as Raga Basant of the Hindustani system, with some changes which it had undergone in the South. Enough has been said to show that the compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar have been greatly enriched by his knowledge of Hindustani Ragas and it seems desirable that there should be a critical study of his compositions in this aspect, by persons having knowledge of both these systems.

Even in the handling of Ragas other than those adopted from the Hindustani system, the compositions of Dikshitar, bear a strong impress of his knowledge of that system. But this is a topic which can be considered more appropriately when considering the Music of Dikshitar.

Dikshitar spent some 5 or 6 years of his life happily at Benaras acquiring knowledge of Vedanta Sastra and of Music. According to tradition of devotees one day Chidambaranatha Yogi, while worshipping before Goddess Annapurneswari, told Dikshitar that She would give not merely food in this life, but also Moksha after it, and that he should worship Her all his life-time. The next day, when going to the Ganga for bath, Yogi called Dikshitar, and said to him: "The time has come when we must part. Are you not anxious to go home and see your parents and brothers?"

"Worshipping the Deities, and serving your Holiness in this Mukti-kshetra, I forget my home" replied Dikshitar.

"But your father was unwilling to send you, and would be anxious to see you. Should you not go home and attend on him? Go down three or four steps in the Ganga, and tell me what you get" said the Swami.

Dikshitar stepped down the Ganga and lo ! he caught a Vina, with the word Rama inscribed on it in Devanagari.

He delivered it to the Yogi. "This is the Prasada of the Ganga Devi to you. You will become a great Vainika and Musician", said Chidambaranatha Yogi, and gave it to him with his blessing.[1] Then leaving Dikshitar on the shore, he plunged as usual, in the Ganges for a bath, and that was the last of him. He left this mortal world and his body was all that remained of him. That was recovered from the river and buried in the Hanuman Ghat. Sorrow-stricken at the demise of his revered Guru, Muthuswami Dikshitar left Benaras and started on his journey back home.

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[1] This Vina is with Baluswami, the grandson of Subbarama Dikshitar, and the son of my Guru Muthuswami Dikshitar *alias* Ambi Dikshitar, son of Subbarama Dikshitar.

CHAPTER III

TIRUTTANI AND KANCHI

From Kasi Dikshitar slowly found his way back to Manali. His parents and brothers were overwhelmed with joy at his return. They listened to his narration of his life at Benaras with wonder. His knowledge of Vedanta earned their respect, and his mastery of Hindustani Music, their admiration. For some time it was all festivity and holiday-making at Manali.[1]

But Dikshitar could not long be content with this life at Manali. Chidambaranatha Yogi was very much in his mind. He remembered that Lord Subrahmanya was his Ishta Daivata, and that he used to speak often about the endless glory and grace of the Lord. So there arose an urge in him to worship Lord Subrahmanya. There is, some fifty miles from Manali, a famous place called Tiruttani, where there is, on the top of a hill, a temple dedicated to Lord Subrahmanya. To that place Dikshitar went and ascending the steps, he stood before the shrine, and plunged into deep meditation. Then he thought, "My father worshipped Balambika for a Mandala, with the object of getting progeny. Why not I engage in the worship of Her Son for a Mandala for getting spiritual knowledge (Gnana)". So he resolved to spend forty days in Tiruttani, worshipping Lord Subrahmanya and performing Bhajana. Day in and day out he sat before the shrine, doing Shadakshari Japa and Bhajana. Pilgrims came and pilgrims went but he stood there, engaged in contemplation, firm as the rock on which the temple stood.

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[1] Another and a different version is that by the time Muthuswami Dikshitar returned to Manali, his parents had already left for Tiruvarur. Whichever version is accepted, the substance of the story as related here would remain the same.

On the 40th day an incident happened which might be said to be the turning point in the career of Dikshitar. After the mid-day worship, when the pilgrims had mostly stepped down, while he was repeating the Shadakshari mantram with eyes closed, an old man appeared before him, and said "Muthuswami, open your mouth." Dikshitar opened his eyes, and saw before him an elderly man beaming with spiritual splendour. "I am a stranger to this place. How does he know my name ?" thought Dikshitar. Then the old man put something in his mouth, and said "Close your eyes and tell me what it is that I have given you." Dikshitar implicitly obeyed, closed his eyes, and said "Sir, it is sugarcandy". So saying he opened his eyes. To his amazement the old man had disappeared, and it is said that in his place there appeared before him the vision of Lord Subrahmanya seated on a Peacock, with Valli and Devasena on either side and the pageant receded before his eyes and vanished in the Sanctum Sanctorum. Dikshitar concluded that it was the Lord that had appeared before him as an old man, and that the sugarcandy which He gave him was Gnana. His joy new no bounds and he burst into Music, and sang the Glories of the Lord in a number of songs, addressing Him as Guru-Guha. This group of songs is therefore known as Guru-Guha Kritis or as the Tiruttani Kritis.

The very first song opens with the words, "Guha, the

Guru of Sri Natha and others excels in Glory".[1] It may be mentioned that a person who is given initiation or Diksha in Sri Vidya is given a Diksha name, and that the Diksha name of Chidambaranathaswami was Srinathananda and that of Muthuswami Dikshitar Chidanandanatha. The reference to "Srinatha" might be construed as a veiled one to the Guru of Dikshitar. This song is in Mayamalavagoula, which is the Raga in which, ever since the days of Purandaradas, students of classical Carnatic Music are given Swara exercises. Then follows the famous kriti, "Manasa Guru Guha" in Ananda Bhairavi, in which having in mind the vanished vision of the Lord, Dikshitar says "O ! Mind, think of the Rupam (Form) of Guru Guha and caste off all agonies of mind, which are of Maya (illusion)".[2] There is a song in Raga Purvi which begins as follows : "I am the Dasa of Guru-Guha ; or rather I am myself Guru-Guha".[3] To appreciate the true significance of these passages it must be stated that one school of Vedantins holds the view that when a Bhakta is blessed with the grace of God, he is given a place in Heaven, and can have the pleasure of serving the Lord as His Dasa ; while another school maintains that true and eternal bliss lies in the realisation of God within oneself, and that can be achieved only by Gnana and that Bhakti is important as leading on to it.

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[1] श्रीनाथादिगुरुगुहो जयति जयति

[3] मानसगुरुगुहरूपं भज रे रे ।
मायामयहृत्तापं त्यज रे रे ।

[3] श्रीगुरुगुहस्य दासोऽहं—नो चेत्,
चिदगुरुगुहरावाहम् ।

Sankaracharya is the great exponent of the latter school, and it is to this school that Dikshitar belonged. The passages quoted above are expressive of these concepts; and the passage "Or rather, I am myself Guru-Guha" is only the Mahavakya "I am Brahmam",[1] in another form. Similar passages occur in the song "Sri Kamalambikaya"[2] and in other songs.

Turning next to the Ragas of these kritis, they are as follows :

1. Srinathadi Guru Guho — Mayamalava Goula
2. Manasa-Guru Guha — Ananda-Bhairavi
3. Sri-Guruna — Padi
4. Guru-Guhaya — Sama
5. Guru-Guhadanyam — Balahamsa
6. Guru-Guhasya — Purvi
7. Guru-Guhaswamini — Bhanumati
8. Sri Guru-Guha Murte — Udayaravichandrika

It will be seen that many of the Ragas used in these songs are what are considered to be Apurva (Rare) Ragas. Of them Padi, Purvi and Udayaravichandrika live only in these compositions. Raga Bhanumati is not only rare but also one in a Vivadi Mela, and Dikshitar has shown great skill in avoiding Vivadi-Doshas, (unharmonious phrases). A study of the Guru-Guha Kirtanas clearly reveals that Dikshitar had even by this time—he was about twenty five—attained high maturity in his knowledge both of Vedanta and of art Music.

There is, in these kritis, another feature which deserves to be noted. They are eight of them in number, and they are each cast in one of the eight Vibhakthis (Cases in which a noun is inflected in Sanskrit). This practice Dikshitar followed whenever he composed eight songs or more on a Diety, and that bespeaks considerable command of the language.

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[1] अहं ब्रह्मास्मि ।

[2] श्रीकमलाम्बिकया कटाक्षितोऽहम्
सच्चिदानंदपरिपूर्णंब्रह्मास्मि ।

Some fifty miles north of Tiruttani, lie the Tirupati Hills wherein is located the famous temple dedicated to Lord Venkateswara, who was also the family deity of Dikshitar. It is said that just before Muthuswami Dikshitar returned to Manali from Benaras, his younger brother Chinnaswami had suddenly lost his eyes, but regained them by the grace of Venkateswara to whom Ramaswami Dikshitar offered Puja and prayer. From Tiruttani Muthuswami Dikshitar went on a journey to Tirupati and worshipped Venkateswara and sang the Kriti in Raga Varali "Seshachalanayakam Bhajami" in praise of the Lord. Therein he has described Him as "the Joy of Abhinava Guru-Guha", meaning thereby himself. Thus he adoped "Guru-Guha" as his Mudra. From Tirupati, Dikshitar travelled to a well-known kshetra (sacred place) nearby, known as Kalahasti, where there is a temple dedicated to Lord Siva. According to Saiva Agamas, there are in South India five Kshetras, in which the Sivalingas are worshipped as manifestations of each one of the five elements. They are as follows :

1. Prithvi (Earth) — Kanchipuram
2. Ap (Water) — Jambukeswaram (Tiruchirapalli)
3. Tejas (Fire) — Tiruvannamalai
4. Vayu (Wind) — Kalahasti
5. Akasa (Sky) — Chidambaram

Muthuswami Dikshitar went to Kalahasti, worshipped at the Vayu-lingam in the place and sang the praise of the Lord in the kriti "Sri Kalahastisa,' in Raga Huseni.

From Kalahasti he returned to Manali and related to his parents and brothers, his experience at Tiruttani, and the songs which he had composed at the several shrines. They were all thrilled, and Ramaswami Dikshitar said "You are the gift of the Devi. All this is by Her Grace. You are truly blessed." The brothers of Muthuswami Dikshitar learned all the Kritis and sang them and listening to them Ramaswami Dikshitar said "This is divine Music. It will live for ever.".

It was not long before Muthuswami Dikshitar felt that he should move out of Manali and visit the famous shrines of South India. Religious by nature and by early training, his life at Kasi had made him wholly God-minded, and the vision of Lord Subrahmanya which he had at Tiruttani, had settled him. His outlook was wholly spiritual. His father had no doubt got him married, as was the practice of that age, even while he was a boy studying at Tiruvarur, and that too, to two wives. But he possessed a mind over which things of the earth held no dominion because his spirit was ethereal and in communion with God. So he lived, all along, the life of a Grihastha-Sanyasi, living in the family, and yet out of it. Says the Bhagavad-Gita, "He who performs his duties without attachment is a Sanyasi and a Yogi"[1] and that was Dikshitar. He had before him the lives of the great Saivaite Saints of South India called the Nayanmars, and the Vaishnavaite Saints called Alwars, who had spent all their life-time in visiting one temple after another and singing songs in praise of the Lord. Adopting them as his model, he travelled all his life from one shrine to another, and sang the praise of the Deities there. The whole of his biography can be summed up as one continuous story of pilgrimages to temples.

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[1] अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं
कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।
स संन्यासी च योगी च
न निरग्निर्नचाक्रियः ॥ *(Bhaguvad-Gita, VI-1)*

There is, some 40 miles from Madras, a place well-known in the political and cultural history of South India. It is Kanchipuram, which was once the Capital of the Pallava Kings. There are a good many temples there, Saivaite and Vaishnavaite, so much so it is known as the town of temples. One of them is the famous temple dedicated to the Devi, called Kamakshi. The great Sankaracharya visited it in the beginning of the ninth Century, and installed a Sri Chakra in it and that has remained one of the chief attractions of the place down to the present day. As a devotee of the Devi and as a follower of the Sri Vidya Cult, Dikshitar was anxious to go to Kanchi and worship Kamakshi. So the entire family shifted from Manali, where it had lived for so many years, and settled down at Kanchi. During this period Muthuswami Dikshitar composed a number of kritis on Kamakshi, and on Ekamreshwara, that being the name of Lord Siva in Kanchi. Among them the more famous are "Kanjadalayathakshi" in Raga Kamalamanohari (according to Venkatamakhi simply Manohari), "Nirajakshi Kamakshi", in Raga Hindolam, "Saraswati-Manohari" in Raga Saraswati Manohari (as propounded by Venkatamakhi) and "Ekamresa-Nayike", in Raga Karnatak Shudda

Saveri. Of the pieces, on Ekamreshwara, the one in Bhairavi "Chintaya Makanda", and "Ekamranatham Bhajeham" in Raga Gamakakriya are among the best known. The song "Chintaya Makanda" describes the Lord as Prithvi (Earth) Linga and is one of the Pancha Linga Kirtanas. There is also another temple in Kanchi dedicated to Lord Siva, under the name of Kailasanatha, and Dikshitar has composed a number of Kritis on this Deity. Of these mention might be made of "Kailasanatham in Vegavahini, and "Kailasanathena" in Kamboji. This temple has latterly fallen into neglect.

Kanchipuram is also one of the important Vishnu Kshetrams and the temple of Varadarajaswami there is one of the most famous in the South. Dikshitar has sung the praise of this Deity in the Kriti "Varadarajam-upasmahe", in Raga Saranga of the Carnatic system. It should be mentioned in this context, that though Dikshitar followed the model of the Saivaite and Vaishnavaite Saints of old (Nayanmars and Alwars) in visiting shrines and composing songs in praise of the Deities there, he differed from them, in an essential particular. While they as a rule visited only the temples belonging to their respective denomination, Saivaite or Vaishnavaite, Dikshitar made no difference between the two but visited all of them and sang of all of them. The reason for this is to be found in the Adwaita school of Vedanta philosophy which he had been taught. According to that School, worship of the several Deities under different names and forms (Saguno-pasana) is only a step in training the mind to withdraw itself from attachment to the world, and to concentrate on the contemplation of the Creator and that the ultimate object should be to realise within oneself the

Para-brahma as Omnipresent and Omnipotent, and as transcending all limitations of name and form (Nirgunopasana). Steeped in this philosophy, Dikshitar visited all shrines, Vaishnavaite as well as Saivaite, worshipped all the Deities, and composed Kritis on all of them and while describing them in their distinct names and forms, he always emphasised that they were all manifestations of the one Creator who has neither Name nor Form. It might be said generally of the Kritis of Dikshitar that they present a happy blending of both Bhakti and Gnana.

There was living at Kanchi at that time, a Sanyasin called Upanishad Brahmam. He was a great philosopher, and has written commentaries on some Upanishads. He was also a staunch Bhakta of Rama and it was he who initiated Sri Tyagaraja in the Taraka Mantra of Sri Rama. He had written an opera on Sri Rama, called Ramashtapadi, with songs modelled on those in the Gita-Govinda of Sri Jayadeva. The fame of Muthuswami Dikshitar had spread so widely in Kanchi, that Upanishad Brahmam invited him to his Mutt and asked him to set the songs to suitable melodies, which Dikshitar did. Unfortunately these melodies appear to have been lost.

Dikshitar wanted to avail himself of this opportunity to complete the study of Vedanta and for that purpose approached Upanishad Brahmam, who besides teaching him the Upanishads, also inculcated in him a strong devotion to Sri Rama. His influence is clearly reflected in many of the songs on Sri Rama, which Dikshitar composed. Thus in the Kriti in Raga Manji, "Ramachandrena Samrakshitoham", he describes Rama as the embodiment of the Lords of Lakshmi, Saraswati and Gauri.[1] In the song in Raga Mahuri, "Mamava Raghuvira" he says, "Lord Siva and others speak of you as the Brahmam."[2] These passages are identical in import with those of Sri Tyagaraja in his Kriti "Evarani". Again it is an accepted article of faith of the devotees of Sri Rama and that is also the creed of the followers of many other faiths, that His very name is a Taraka Mantra, and that any person, low or high, who performs a japa of that name is sure to get salvation. Having this in mind Dikshitar describes Sri Rama in the aforesaid, Mahuri piece as "One whose name sanctifies all persons, layman as well as the learned."[3] Dikshitar lived in Kanchi for a period of about 4 years. Latterly thoughts of Sri Tyagarajaswami and Kamalamba began to haunt him and so he broke up his establishment at Kanchi and started on a journey to Tiruvarur.

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[1] रमाभारतीगौरीरमणस्वरूपेण रामचन्द्रेण संरक्षितोऽहम् ।

[2] त्वामाहुरीशादयस्तत्वमिति ।

[3] पामरपण्डितपावनकरनामधेयगुरुगुहनुत । मामव रघुवीर ।

CHAPTER IV

TIRUVARUR

IT IS characteristic of Muthuswami Dikshitar that though he left Kanchi because of his eagerness to go to Tiruvarur, he did not proceed directly to that place, but thought of visiting the famous temples which were situated *en route*. He travelled first to Tiruvannamalai, which is one of the Pancha-Linga Kshetrams, wherein the Lord is known as Arunachaleswara and is considered to be a manifestation of *Agni* (Fire). Dikshitar visited this temple, and worshipped the Deity and sang His praise in a Kriti in Raga Saranga of the Carnatic system beginning with the words "Arunachala-natham smarami".

Then Dikshitar went to Chidambaram, which, again, is one of the Pancha-Linga Kshetrams, wherein the Lord is worshipped as a manifestation of *Akasa* (Sky). He is called Nataraja, and his cosmic dance has a mystic significance. This is one of the most famous shrines in India and Dikshitar has composed a number of songs on it. Of them the best known is the kriti in Raga Kedara of the Carnatic system, beginning with the words "Ananda Natana Prakasam". A notable feature of this kriti is that it has appended to it "sollukkattu" (Bols) suitable to dance. The Devi is called Sivakameswari, and on Her Dikshitar has sung the piece "Sivakameswarim" in Kalyani. There is adjacent to the Nataraja shrine a Vaishnava temple dedicated to Sri Govindaraja. Dikshitar has sung His praise in several kritis, of which mention might be made of the one in Mukhari beginning with the words "Govindarajam

Upasmahe", and the one in a Raga called Mecha Bauli, beginning with the words "Govindarajena." This is a rare Raga, which is known to us only from the Gitas of Venkatamakhi and this kriti of Dikshitar.[1]

Resuming his journey to Tiruvarur, Dikshitar, crossed the Coleroon and went to Vaidiswarankoil where he sang several kritis in praise of the Deities there, Vaidianatha, Balambika and Muthukumaraswami. He composed a number of songs on Balambika, of which best known is "Bhaja Re Re Chitta Balambikam," the one in Kalyani Raga which has been already referred to. "Sri Vaidianatham" is a kriti on the Lord, and is in Raga Atana. From Vaidiswarankoil, Dikshitar proceeded on to Mayuram, where there is an ancient Siva Temple, in which the Lord and the Devi, are called Mayuranathaswami and Abhayamba. Dikshitar spent some months there and composed several kirtanas in praise of the Lord and the Devi. The kritis on "Abhayamba" are particularly remarkable both for the elaborate delineation of Raga features, and the exposition of Tantric doctrines. In the piece "Ambikayah Abhayambikayah" in Raga Kedara of Carnatic Music, there is a description of the process by which Kundalini Shakti is kindled. These compositions, like the Guru-Guha kritis, are cast in all the Vibhakthis (Case-inflections). They are as follows:

1. Abhayamba Jagadamba — Kalyani
2. Aryamabhayamam — Bhairavi
3. Girijaya Ajaya — Sankarabharanam
4. Abhayambikayai — Yadukulakambodi

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[1] There is also a piece by a later composer, "Devi Divya" which was set to melody in this Raga by Subbarama Dikshitar.

5. Abhayambikayah — Kedaragoula
6. Ambikayah Abhayambikayah — Kedaram
7. Abhayambikayam — Sahana
8. Dakshayani — Todi

There is a piece on the Devi in Sri Raga beginning with the words "Sri Abhayamba Ninnu." The singing of this Raga generally signifies an auspicious conclusion and it may, therefore, be taken that the intention of Dikshitar in composing this kriti was that the compositions already referred to should be sung in a group in a Bhajana, and that this piece should be the auspicious finale. Another notable feature of this Sri Raga piece is that it is composed in three languages, Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil, and is called a "Mani-pravalam." There are a few more pieces of this kind. The best known of them is the song on Venkatachalapati "Venkatachalapate Ninnu Nammithi," in Raga Kapi.

From Mayuram, Dikshitar proceeded on to Tiruvarur. Ramaswami Dikshitar had shifted from that place to Manali some 16 years previously. But his name was still fresh in the minds of the people there, and he was held in great respect as an eminent musician, composer and organiser of the Nagaswaram recitals in the Tyagarajaswami temple. As for Muthuswami Dikshitar, though he left the place as a boy, his fame as a gifted composer had already come in advance of him, and the people were all looking forward to their return to Tiruvarur, with pride, and with enthusiasm. It was a memorable day when Ramaswami Dikshitar and his sons returned to that place. Great was their joy when they entered their old home, and profound their gratitude when the residents gave them a hearty welcome, and it was with infinite pleasure that they settled down at Tiruvarur.

The main attraction for Muthuswami Dikshitar in Tiruvarur was the temple of Sri Tyagarajaswami. It is one of the most imposing in South India, hoary in its traditions, colossal in its dimensions, with numerous shrines within it, and a holy tank without it, which is the largest of its kind. Dikshitar spent most of his time at the temple, worshipping at the various shrines and singing kritis composed on them. Thus we have compositions on Sri Tyagarajaswami, Sri Kamalamba, Sri Nilotpalamba, Ganesa and Subramania. There is also a piece on Renuka Devi enshrined in Vijayapuram in Tiruvarur, in Raga Kannada-Bangala and one on Sundaramurti Nainar, the Thevaram saint of Tiruvarur, in Raga Takka.

The largest number of kritis is on Sri Tyagarajaswami. There is a group of Vibhakthi kritis on Him and they are as follows:

1. Tyagarajo Virajate — Atana
2. Tyagarajam Bhaja Re — Yadukula Kambodi
3. Tyagarajena Samrakshitoham — Salaka Bhairavi
4. Tyagarajaya Namasthe — Begada
5. Tyagarajadanyam — Darbar
6. Sri Tyagarajasya Bhakto — Rudrapriya
7. Tyagaraje Kritya-Krityam — Saranga
8. Viravasantha Tyagaraja — Viravasantham

Apart from this group, there are several other songs on Sri Tyagaraja, of which the most famous are "Tyagaraja palayasu mam" in Raga Goula, and "Tyagaraja Yoga Vaibhavam" in Raga Anandabhairavi. There is also a kriti in Raga Sri, beginning with the words "Tyagaraja—Mahadhwajaroha," describing the course of the annual

Vasanthotsava in the temple.

Apart from the main shrine, there are within the temple five Sivalinga shrines, on all of which Dikshitar has composed kritis and they are as follows :

1. Achaleswara — Bhupala
2. Hatakeswara — Bilahari
3. Valmikeswara — Kambodi
4. Anandeswara — Ananda Bhairavi
5. Siddhiswara — Nilambari

Then there is the group of songs, called the Navavarana Kirtanas. They are all in praise of the Devi, Kamalamba. As musical pieces, they are among the masterpieces in Carnatic Music. One can see that the genius of Dikshitar has, in these kritis, attained full maturity in the portrayal of Raga forms. He presents a picture of them which must, for fullness and fidelity, be said to be unrivalled. These compositions are massive and magnificent and it can be said of them that they are Temples of Nada in which the Raga-Devatas are enshrined. As to their Sahitya contents, what is unique about them is that they give us a peep into the Tantric mode of worship of the Devi. The Tantras prescribe an elaborate ritual for the worship of the Devi. It is said that in order to reach Her, one must pass through nine circles, at every one of which Puja has to be performed to Her. They have each its own distinct name and distinct shakthis and the benefits which they respectively confer are different, and it is only when Puja is performed for all the nine "Circles" that the Devi will confer full benefit on Her devotee. This elaborate ritual is termed "Navavarana Puja." The nine kirtanas of Dikshitar are dedicated to the worship of the Devi at the several "Circles." Over and above these nine songs, there are a Dhyana (Invocation) Kirtana, and a Mangala (auspicious ending) Kirtana. In all, the Navavarana Kirtanas consist of eleven pieces and they are set out below:

Kamalambike (Dhyana) — Todi
Kamalamba Samrakshatu — Ananda Bhairavi
Kamalamham Bhaja Re — Kalyani
Sri Kamalambikaya — Sankarabharanam
Kamalambikayai — Kambodi
Sri Kamalambikayah Param — Bhairavi
Kamalambikayas thava — Punnagavarali
Sri Kamalambikayam Bhaktim — Sahana
Sri Kamalambike Ava Ava — Ghanta
Sri Kamalamba Jayathi — Ahiri
Sri Kamalambike — Sri Raga

It may be noted that the first eight of the "Avarana" Kirtanas are in the eight Vibhakthis. As regards the ninth Avarana Kirtana in Raga Ahiri, it is cast in all the eight Vibhakthis.

There is, in the temple of Sri Tyagarajaswami, another shrine dedicated to the Devi, called Sri Nilotpalamba. The tradition is that Kamalamba represents the Devi while She was still performing Tapas with the object of marrying Siva, while Nilotpalamba represents Her after Her marriage with the Lord. Dikshitar has sung the following Kritis in Nilotpalamba :

1. Nilotpalamba Jayathi — Narayana Gaula
2. Nilotpalambam Bhaja Re — Ritigaula[1]
3. Nilotpalambikaya — Kannada Goula
4. Nilotpalambikayai — Kedara Goula

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[1] There is another song on Sri Nilotpalamba, in Raga Ritigaula but that is an independent piece, outside this group.

5. Nilotpalambikayah — Gaula
6. Nilotpalambayasthana — Mayamalava Goula
7. Nilotpalambikayam — Purva Goula
8. Sri Nilotpalambike — Chhaya Goula

All these eight songs are cast in the eight Vibhaktis of Sanskrit grammar. It should be noted that one of the pieces is in Raga Goula and all the others in Ragas ending with the word "Goula." They are all of them known as "Goula" group songs. That does not mean that their melodics are allied. While three of the songs (Nos. 5,6 and 8) belong to the same Mela, the others belong to other Melas. Their forms are different. Even the three songs of the Mayamalava group are different from each other in their melodic contents. Two of the Ragas handled in this group, Chhaya Goula and Purva Goula, are Apurva Ragas and the kritis in those two Ragas, therefore, are of great value. As for the Sahitya contents of those songs, they are all in the form of stotra, and do not involve any Tantric ritualism.

There are in the temple of Sri Tyagarajaswami a number of shrines dedicated to Ganapathi. According to the Agamas, there are 16 manifestations of Ganesa, each having a distinct name, and a distinct Mantra and Tantra for its worship, and the benefits to be derived therefrom are different. It is said that all of them find a place in the Tiruvarur temple. Dikshitar was a master of "Ganapatyam" (Sastra relating to worship of Ganapathi) and his songs on Ganapathi reveal an intimate knowledge thereof. Among the most famous of them are "Vatapiganapathim" in Raga Hamsadhwani, "Sri Mahaganapatiravathumam" in Raga Goula, "Sri Muladhara-Chakravinayaka" in Raga Sri, "Panchamathanga Mukha

Ganapathina" in Raga Malahari, and "Kari-Kalabha mukham" in Saveri.

In short, it can be said that the kritis of Dikshitar on the Deities at Tiruvarur form the largest block of songs written by him on any shrine at any place in his career, and that qualitatively also they rank among his best.

It was the ambition of Dikshitar to visit all the famous shrines in South India and sing the praise of the Deities there. Therefore even though he had settled at Tiruvarur, he often used to go on pilgrimage to other places where there were famous temples. It was during this period, that he visited Swamimalai, Mannargudi, Nagapattinam, Tiruchirapalli and many other places in the Cauvery region and wrote kritis on the Deities in the temples there. There is in Swamimalai, a great temple dedicated to Lord Subrahmania. It is one of the six important shrines dedicated to that Deity. Dikshitar has composed a number of kritis on this shrine, and of them "Swaminatha" in Raga Nata and "Sri Balasubramania" in Raga Bilahari are the best known. There is at Mannargudi a Vaishnavaite temple dedicated to Sri Rajagopalaswami. The Deity is called "Sri Vidya Rajagopala" as in this temple Lord Krishna is associated with Sri Vidya, which is of the very essence of the Devi worship. Dikshitar has sung a number of kritis in praise of this Deity, the most famous of which is the song "Sri Rajagopala", in Raga Saveri. There is also a piece in Raga Jaganmohini beginning with the words "Sri Vidya Rajagopalam". There are at Nagapattinam several famous temples. There is a Siva temple in which the Lord is called Kayarohana and the Devi is called Nilayathakshi and there is a famous Vishnu temple in which the deity is called Sri Soundararaja. Dikshitar has composed a number of kritis on them, and of them the most famous are a kriti on Nilayathakshi "Amba Nilayathakshi" in Raga Nilambari and a song on Sri Soundararaja in Raga Brindavana Saranga beginning with the words "Soundararajam Asraye". There is also a piece on Kayarohana "Kayarohanesam Bhaja Re" in Raga Devagandharam.

Dikshitar had an only daughter and no sons, and she had been married in Tiruchirapalli. Dikshitar had many occasions to go to that place and then he used to visit the temples there and compose songs on the Deities. There is in Tiruchirapalli, a place called Jambukeswaram (Tiruvanakkaval) which is one of the Pancha-Linga Kshetras, and in which Siva is worshipped as a manifestation of Ap (Water). Here Dikshitar wrote the famous kirtana "Jambupate" in Raga Yamuna Kalyani already mentioned. On the Devi in that temple he composed the kriti "Sri Matas Siva vamanke" in Begada. On Matribhuteswara, he sang "Sri Matrubhutam" in Raga Kannada and this is one of the grandest of his pieces. He visited Srirangam and sang many kritis on Ranganatha and Ranganayaki. Of them the most famous are "Ranganayakam" in Ranganayaki, and "Sri Bhargavi" in Raga Mangala Kaisiki, which is a rather rare melody. There are also on the banks of the Akhanda Cauvery several kshetras on which Dikshitar has written songs. Of them the most popular are "Pahimam Ratnachala Nayaka" in Raga Mukhari, and "Nilakantam Bhaje" in Raga Kedara Goula.

The visit of Dikshitar to Kivalur requires special mention. This is a place near Tiruvarur, and its chief attraction is an ancient temple dedicated to Lord Siva, called "Akshaya Linga". There is a traditional story told about his visit to the temple. Dikshitar composed a kriti on the Deity in Sankarabharanam beginning with the words "Akshayalinga Vibho Swayambho" and proceeded on to Kivalur to sing it before the Deity. By the time he went there the Puja was over and the Archaka was closing the door of the Sanctum Sanctorum and preparing to depart. Requesting him to keep the door open for a short time, Dikshitar said, "Sir, I have come all the way from Tiruvarur for a Darshan of the Deity. Kindly keep the doors open for a short time." The Archaka replied cynically "Sir, you want Darshan, you can have it tomorrow. The Deity is not going to run away." So saying he was preparing to depart. Then Dikshitar sat down and began to sing the kriti. His music attracted the people of the village who flocked in large numbers to hear him. The Archaka also stayed on with a look of surprise and curiosity. When Dikshitar was coming to the end of the piece, lo ! the doors of the Sanctum Sanctorum opened of their own accord, presenting a full view of the Deity. The people were amazed, and the Archaka, who was stunned, fell at the feet of Dikshitar and asked to be forgiven. After blessing him, and after having a full Darshan, Dikshitar returned to Tiruvarur.[1]

The fame of Dikshitar as a saintly composer spread far and wide. Dharmakarthas of prominent temples and magnates began to vie with each other in inviting him to visit the temples with which they were connected, and to compose songs on the Deities. One such person was Vaidyalinga Mudaliar, Mirasdar of Kulikarai (Garthathirtha) a place near Tiruvarur, where there is a Siva temple dedicated to Visveswara, Visalakshi and Annapurna. Dikshitar accepted the invitation and spent some days there, composing songs in praise of the Deities. Of them the best known are "Kasi Visveswara" in Raga Kambodi and "Annapurne" in Raga Sama. The Mirasdar was so much pleased with these compositions that he conferred certain special honours on him (called Kanakabhishekam). Then it was suggested to Dikshitar that he might compose a song in praise of the Mirasdar, but he declined and said, that it would do no good either to the Mudaliar or to himself and that he would pray to the Lord to protect him and that was more valuable. He then composed his famous Ragamalika "Sri Viswanatham", in fourteen Ragas, in the last of which he described the Lord as "Protector of the magnate Vaidyalinga"[1].

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[1] Many stories of miracles have gathered around Dikshitar as well as Tyagaraja. I am referring only such of them as have been related to me by my Guru Ambi Dikshitar, as a matter of family tradition.

The stand taken by Dikshitar is all the more to be appreciated, when it is remembered that he was never in affluent circumstances, and had often to struggle to keep the wolf away from his doors. Many are the anecdotes which are current on this matter. One of them might be mentioned here as it has reference to this period and supported by the weight of the tradition in the family. There was an occasion when the provisions at home had touched the bottom level, so much so there was very little left for consumption even for that day. The ladies in the kitchen were in straits. At that time Dikshitar was engaged in teaching his songs to his sishyas. One of them was Dasi Kamalam, who had *mirasi* rights in the temple. The wife of Dikshitar called Kamalam inside and said "Kamalam, there is no rice to cook and we are all facing starvation. Can you help us?" Kamalam said "Madam, why should you worry yourself, when I am here. I shall pledge these gold bangles of mine, and with the funds purchase all that you want". These words fell on the ears of Dikshitar. Has it come to this, he thought, that instead of my maintaining my sishyas they have to maintain me? He felt inexpressibly sad, and when Kamalam came out he said "Kamalam, what are you doing? Your bangles can feed us for a few days. What about the future? What will be left of your jewels, if you are to maintain us all our life-time. It is God that gives food for all of us, and if I am a real Bhakta of Sri Tyagesa, he will not desert me in my hour of need. Do not pledge the jewels, and do not give any one any occasion to say that I am making a living out of my teaching Music to my sishyas." With that Dikshitar left, as usual, for worship in the temple. That very day he had composed a song on Sri Tyagaraja in Yadukulakambodi, beginning with the words "Tyagarajam Bhaja Re Re Chitta." He sang that piece with Bhakti and with emotion before the shrine and returned home. An agreeable surprise awaited him. What had happened was that a high ranking Government official of the Tanjore King had planned to visit Tiruvarur on that date, and the local Officer had collected provisions on a large scale for him. But that very morning an official communication had been received from the inspecting Officer that his trip had been cancelled, and the local official thought that the provisions for which there was no use in the office might properly be sent to the saintly composer. When Dikshitar came to know of this, he gratefully observed, "Tyagarajaswami has saved me". and composed the kriti "Tyagarajena Samrakshitoham" in Raga Salaka Bhairavi.

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[1] In his work entitled *Oriental Music in European Notation* published in 1892, the editor Chinnaswami Mudaliar has published this Ragamalika with the following footnote: "This Ragamalika was composed at the instance of Vaidyalinga Mudaliar, a learned Mirasdar of Kulikarai. This gentleman who had honoured Muthuswami Dikshitar with a Kanakabhishekam in recognition of his extraordinary merits requested him to compose a song in his own praise; the composer who like Tyagaraja had a sovereign contempt of Narastuti wrote in praise of the divinities of the place ending with a prayer for the welfare of the Bhupala."

Kamalam was one of the Dasis attached to the temple, and had the *mirasi* right to dance before the Deity. The time had come when she had to be formally admitted to the Office, and on that occasion she had to give a dance recital (Arangetral). Dikshitar was asked to compose pieces for the occasion, and he said that he would do so but that all the compositions would only be on God. Of the pieces composed by him on this occasion, we have a Padavarnam on Tyagesa, "Rupamu Suchi" in Raga Todi, and a Daru, "Ni sati Daivamandu Ledani" in Raga Sriranjani. Among the persons who attended this dance recital were Ponniah, Vadivelu and his brothers, known as Thanjavur Brothers. They were so much impressed by the performance, that they waited on Dikshitar, entreated him to take them as his sishyas, and requested him to settle down at Thanjavur, and teach them Music. Dikshitar promised to do so in due course.

Thambiappan was one of the service-holders in the Tyagarajaswami temple and had specialised in playing on the Shuddha-Maddalam, and he was an ardent sishya of Dikshitar. He had a sudden attack of stomach pains, and the doctors who treated him were unable to effect a cure. Hearing this, Dikshitar, who was also an expert in Astrology, sent for his horoscope, and on examining it, thought that it was due to the adverse influence exerted by "Guru" at that time, and that, to get relief, it was necessary to propitiate that planet. Vedic Mantras were out of the question, and so it struck him that resort might be had to a song on "Guru". Elaborating the idea, he conceived that it would be useful to compose a group of songs on all the Planets as that would benefit all mankind. And so he composed the Navagraha kritis which are as follows :

1. "Suryamurthe" on the Sun in Saurashtra Raga
2. "Chandram Bhaja" on the Moon in Asaveri Raga
3. "Angarakam" on Mars in Surati Raga
4. "Budhamasrayami" on Mercury in Nata-kuranji Raga
5. "Brihaspathe" on Jupiter in Atana Raga
6. "Sri Sukra Bhagavantam" on Venus in Paraju Raga
7. "Divakaratanujam" on Saturn in Yadukula Kambodi Raga
8. "Smaramyaham" on Rahu in Ramamanohari Raga
9. "Mahasuram" on Kethu in Chamaran Raga

It is said that Thambiappan learnt the kriti "Brihaspathe" and sang it regularly and was cured of his illness. This group of Kritis is among the most popular of the compositions of Dikshitar. Apart from the fact that they reveal a very deep knowledge of Astrology, as propounded in the Sanskrit treatises their value as musical compositions is of the highest order. It is not merely that in point of Raga delineation the kritis rank among the best of Dikshitar, but that even in point of their Tala build-up they are unique as presenting a picture of the Suladi Sapta Talas. The Tala system in Carnatic Music is built on the foundation of seven Talas, Dhruva, Matya, Rupaka, Jhampa, Triputa, Ata, and Eka; and a notable feature of these compositions is that the first seven Kritis are set to these seven Talas, in that very order.

In the year 1817, a great change came over the Dikshitar family in Tiruvarur. Early that year both the parents of Muthuswami Dikshitar died. That left a great void in the family. Then some distinguished persons from Madurai visited Dikshitar and invited him to come to that Kshetra and sing the praise of Devi Minakshi and Lord Sundareswara. Dikshitar told them that he was anxious to do so but that it would be sometime later. Then they requested him to send his two brothers Chinnaswami and Baluswami to Madurai to teach them his kirtanas. Dikshitar ascertained that they were willing to go, and gave them permission to accompany the visitors to Madurai. After their departure Dikshitar felt lonely and thought of the invitation of Ponniah and Vadivelu and decided to go to Thanjavur.

CHAPTER V

THANJAVUR

WHEN PONNIAH and his brothers, Chinniah, Sivanandam and Vadivelu, came to know of the intention of Muthuswami Dikshitar to go over to Thanjavur, they were greatly delighted and made arrangements to accommodate him and his family in a building in the West Main Street opposite to their own residence, now taken over by the Sankara Mutt. The news of the advent of Dikshitar evoked considerable enthusiasm in and around the town. Many were the local magnates, scholars and musicians who visited him and paid their respects to him. Among the first to welcome him was the great composer, Syama Sastri, who was living at the other end of the same street, in the Agraharam behind the Kamakshi Amman Temple. They were old friends, and both of them were ardent worshippers of the Devi. At Thanjavur they often used to meet and engage themselves in discussing abstruse Tantric doctrines. As regards Music, the two composers proceeded on somewhat different lines. Syama Sastri laid emphasis on Tala, Dikshitar on Raga. The songs of Syama Sastri are mostly in well-known and popular Ragas, while those of Dikshitar cover the entire range of Ragas then known, rare as well as popular, so much so some of the Apurva Ragas live only in his kritis. Notwithstanding these differences, Syama Sastri liked the compositions of Dikshitar so much, that he put his own son Subbayya Sastri under him for training in Music. Subbayya Sastri became also a composer of high class kritis and it can be said of them that they reflect both the rhythmic beauties of Syama Sastri and the Raga richness of Dikshitar. During this period Chinnaswami and Baluswami who had gone to Madurai, used to occasionally visit their brother Muthuswami Dikshitar at Thanjavur and on such occasions all of them and Syama Sastri used to associate themselves in Music recitals. There is an interesting record of such meets. Ramaswami Dikshitar has written a Chowka-varnam, "Sami Ninne Kori" in Raga Sriranjani. The charanam of the piece has only one Swara passage composed by Ramaswami Dikshitar, while the others would appear to have been lost. Syama Sastri felt that such a good piece as that should not be allowed to die for incompleteness and so he himself composed the second passage of swaras, and called upon Muthuswami Dikshitar and Chinnaswami to complete the varna. The latter composed the third passage and the former the fourth and the last passage.[1] The association of Syama Sastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar in Thanjavur forms one of the most fascinating chapters in the history of South Indian Music.

There are in Thanjavur many temples, and of them the most famous is the one dedicated to Lord Siva called Brihadeswara, and to the Devi called Brihannayaki. It was built by the Chola Emperors while they were at the height of their power. This temple is colossal in its dimensions and is one of the marvels of architectural art. Dikshitar visited this, and the other temples in Thanjavur and composed several kritis in praise of the Deities enshrined therein. Among these songs, the largest number is on Brihadisa and Brihannayaki and of these while some are in well-known Ragas, many are in the Vivadi Mela Ragas of Venkatamakhi. This calls for an explanation.

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[1] See the note in *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini*, Tamil edition by the Music Academy, Madras, Part II, Page 504.

The Scheme of 72 Melas propounded by Venkatamakhi remained even at this time practically unknown to the musicians. It was a closed field to which only the learned few had access. It should be noted that prior to Venkatamakhi the number of Ragas in actual use was less than 150, and of these, the number of Ragas classed as Melas ranged, according to the various writers, from 15 to 19. Further many Ragas which were dissimilar were classed as Janyas of the same mela. It was Venkatamakhi who for the first time enunciated the principle that the classification of Melas and Janya Ragas should be on the basis of the Swaras which they take and working on that principle he propounded the Scheme of 72 Melas. Many of the Melas as conceived by him had no existence in practice. They were the creatures of the scheme evolved by him. It is, therefore, not surprising that writing about 1735 King Tulaja of Thanjavur should have observed in his treatise "Sangita Saramritham" that the Melas of Venkatamakhi had not attained publicity, and that for the ragas actually in use twenty-one melas would be sufficient. So he gave the Lakshanas of the current Ragas in terms of these Melas. Subsequently a change gradually came over the situation. The knowledge of the system of Venkatamakhi began to spread and with that the concept of 72 Melas began to gather strength. Venkatamakhi himself had written Lakshana Gitas for the new melas and they were taken as guides for the featuring of those ragas. This was the state of affairs at the time of Tyagaraja and Dikshitar.

Sonti Venkataramaniah, the Guru of Sri Tyagaraja, was of the Sishya Parampara of Venkatamakhi and Muthuswami Dikshitar had been given training not only in the Mela system as conceived by Venkatamakhi but also in his Lakshana Gitas on the Melas. Thus it was given to these two composers to popularise these Melas, and they did so with great success.

The Thanjavur Brothers belonged to a family which was noted for its achievements in the field of Bharata Natya. It was the desire of these brothers that they should acquire mastery over Classical Music also and for that purpose they wanted to learn the scheme of 72 Melas of Venkatamakhi. It was with this object that they requested Dikshitar to come over to Thanjavur and take them as his Sishyas. When Dikshitar settled down in Thanjavur, he took up this work, and taught Ponniah and his brothers the 72 Melas of Venkatamakhi and his Lakshana Gitas on these Melas Further in order to enable them to pick these up easily, Dikshitar composed songs in all the Vivadi Melas and taught these to them. It is only natural that these compositions should mostly be on the Deities in Thanjavur. Thus it happens that a good number of the kritis composed by Dikshitar on Brihadiswara and Brihannayaki are in the Vivadi Melas of Venkatamakhi.[1] They are short pieces and read like Gitas, and that accords with the purpose for which they were composed, which was to teach these Melas to Ponniah and his brothers. It should be added that out of the Tanjore Brothers, at least two made a good mark in the world of Carnatic Music. Ponniah became a Samsthana

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[1] There are, for example, songs in the Vivadi Melas Nos. 3, 4, 30, 34, 40, 41, 42, 44, 48 and 49. This list is not exhaustive.

Vidwan of the Tanjore Court, and he is besides the author of a number of notable kritis. Among them, particular mention should be made of a group of nine songs in which he pays his tribute to his Guru, "Guru-Guha". In a song in Raga Bhinna-Shadja (which is the ninth mela in the scheme of Venkatamakhi) he says "I am the Sishya of Sri Guru-Guha".[1] In the song in Raga Shaila-Desakshi, which is the 35th Mela of Venkatamakhi, he shows a wonderful grip over the Vivadi Melas. Vadivelu excelled in the art of dancing and became the Samsthana Vidwan in the Court of the Maharajah of Travancore, and the record of his achievements is well-known.

The question has often been asked whether Tyagaraja and Dikshitar ever met. There is no authentic tradition bearing on this matter. But it is very likely that they met at Tiruvaiyar. While at Thanjavur, Dikshitar used to visit the famous temples in that region, and Tiruvaiyar was one of them. He has composed kritis on the Deities there—Pranathar-thihara, Dharmasamvardhani, and even on the Kshetrapala (Pranatharthiharam in Raga Nayaki ; Dharmasamvardhani in Raga Madhyamavati, Narmada in Raga Namadesi ; Sri Vatukanatha in Deva Kriya—to mention only some). It is therefore certain that he visited Tiruvaiyar, and it is very probable that he should have then met Tyagaraja. There is one anecdote which tells us of a meeting between them. It is said that when Dikshitar first went to Tiruvaiyar for Darshana of the Deities in the temple, he sat down before the shrine of Devi, Dharmasamvardhani and sang his kriti on Her in Raga Madhyamavati, mentioned above. At that time one of the Sishyas of Tyagaraja was present there, and he reported this to his Guru. Tyagaraja immediately sent him back asking him to invite Dikshitar and to escort him to his house. Dikshitar responded to the invitation, and came to the house of Tyagaraja. The time of this visit happened to be one of great festivity. Tyagaraja was doing Ramayana Parayanam daily and on that day he had come to the "Ramapattabhishekam". When Dikshitar entered with his Sishyas, there was Bhajana going on, and on seeing him, the entire audience rose to receive him. Tyagaraja welcomed him and Dikshitar paid his respects to him. Then Tyagaraja and his Sishyas sang, suitably to the occasion, the kriti "Koluvayunnade" in Raga Bhairavi. Then at the request of Tyagaraja, Dikshitar and his Sishyas started singing, and the piece that they rendered was "Mamava Pattabhirama" in Raga Manirangu. All the listeners were thrilled by this unique event of the two eminent composers singing on the same occasion. Then there was Samaradhana, after which Dikshitar left.[1] There is nothing improbable about this anecdote, though there is no independent confirmation of it. Another anecdote—and this is supported by family tradition, is that somewhere in 1844 Subbarama Dikshitar, then a lad of seven, was taken by his relatives to Tiruvaiyar, and that when he prostrated before Tyagaraja, the latter spoke with tears in his eyes about the greatness of Muthuswami Dikshitar who had died in 1834, and after blessing the boy, gave sugar-candy to him.

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[1] "Sri Guru-Guha Murthiki Ne Sishyudai Unnanu ra" (Pallavi).

At this time, King Serfoji was the Ruler of the Kingdom of Thanjavur, and he was a lover of Music, and a great patron of arts. Syama Sastri was one of his friends, and it is said that the King used to visit him at his own residence in the Agraharam, and pay his respects to him. Now the wife of Dikshitar used often to visit the wife of Syama Sastri and the story goes that on one of these occasions the latter said to her "My husband informs me that the King of Tanjore greatly admires the songs of your husband, and that if the latter should see him, it is certain that he would be honoured with 'Kanakabhishekam' ". The wife of Dikshitar got very much incited by what she had heard, and on her return to her residence she took it up with her husband, and said : "Everybody says that the King likes your songs, and wants to honour you. Why do you not go to him ? He will load you with shawls and clothes, and golden jewels and vessels and money, and we will be rich for the rest of our life time." Dikshitar replied "Do you know what seeing the King means ? I must see him with a song on him. Do you want me to sing his praise ?"

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[1] This anecdote was given out by the late C. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar.

"What is wrong with it ?" asked the wife. "Your father did that". The reply of Dikshitar was instantaneous. He said, "I will not do it. If I want wealth I shall pray to God, and not to man. I shall pray to Lakshmi Devi, who can give me not merely wealth which is perishable—and money is that, but also wealth which is imperishable, that is eternal bliss beyond life". The wife of Dikshitar retired not very much pleased with the result. Overwhelmed with sadness at the attitude of his wife, which was unusual, Dikshitar invoked the blessings of Lakshmi Devi in a song "Hiranmayim Lakshmim" in Raga Lalitha, in terms of the Sri-Suktha. Therein he said "I shall always pray to Lakshmi Devi, and avoid going to small men. She will grant me imperishable wealth."[1] Then he went to a nearby temple dedicated to Sri Rajagopalaswami and sang that kriti before the shrine of the Goddess. That night he had a dream in which Lakshmi appeared all resplendent in Golden Jewels and said "There is no poverty for you". Dikshitar woke up and related this dream to his wife. She was then in a chastened mood, and entreated him "Forgive and forget what I said." Dikshitar wrote a kriti, "Mangaladevataya', in Raga Dhanyasi, in which he says "O ! Lakshmi, the Destroyer of great evils like poverty, You are gracious towards devotees of Guru-Guha. I have been greatly honoured by you".[2] This anecdote which is current in the Dikshitar family receives support from the two pieces quoted above. It is also in accordance with the one relating to the composition of the Ragamalika at Kulikarai, already mentioned.

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[1] हिरण्मयीं लक्ष्मीं सदा भजामि
हीनमानवाश्रमं त्यजामि ।
स्थिरतर संपत्प्रदाम् ।

[2] मङ्गलदेवतया त्वया बहुमानितोऽहम् ।
हरिद्राकुङ्कुमवस्त्रालंकृतं विग्रहया,
दारिदयदुःखादिमूर्धन्याशिवनिग्रहया,
... ...
वरलक्ष्म्या हरिहमगुरुगुहभक्तानुग्रहया ॥

Here "Guru-Guha Bhaktha" in the original would also mean "Your devotee—Guru-Guha".

CHAPTER VI

MADURAI AND ETTAYYAPURAM

AFTER spending some four or five years at Thanjavur, Muthuswami Dikshitar returned to Tiruvarur. His arrival began soon to attract musicians, and scholars and his house began to vibrate again with music recitals and vedic chants. But amidst all this, the mind of Dikshitar was uneasy. It was exercised over thoughts of the welfare of his brothers. It was some time since he had seen them and latterly he had lost touch with them. Anxious to know about their welfare he was making extensive enquiries, and after some time news of the death of Chinnaswami Dikshitar began to trickle down. Dikshitar immediately decided to go to Madurai and see his brother Baluswami and so with one sishya called Subramania Iyer he started on a journey to that place.

The city of Madurai had a strong hold over the imagination of Muthuswami Dikshitar. It is one of the most ancient of the cities in this country, and a sacred place known as the Halasya Kshetra, where there is a temple dedicated to Lord Siva, and the Devi, under the names of Sundareswara and Minakshi. It was the capital of the great Pandyan Kings, whose valour and achievements earned for them an all-India status[1] and the seat of an ancient culture, sanctified by Agastya, the tutelary sage of the Pandyas. Dikshitar had for a long time been thinking of going to Madurai, and when he sent his brothers to that place, it was really as his advance guards.

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[1] See Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsa* cantos 4 and 6.

The circumstances under which he was now going to that place were depressing but that did not damp his eagerness to visit the temples there and sing the praise of the Deities enshrined therein.

On reaching Madurai, he saw, on the banks of the river Vegavathi (popularly known as Vaigai), a Vinayaka shrine and sang its praise in the piece "Ekadantam Bhaje ham" in Raga Bilahari in which he describes Him as "Gracing the banks of River Vegavathi in the Halasya Kshetra."[1] Then he proceeded on to the temple of Sri Minakshi and after worshipping Her, sat before the shrine, and sang a number of songs in praise of the Devi, and concluded the recital with one on Sri Minakshi beginning with the words "Mamava Minakshi" in Varali Raga. By this time, the Archakas of the temple had gathered and many of the worshippers began to collect around him. One of the Archakas then asked him, "Sir, we have heard some of these songs rendered by two musicians from Tiruvarur. They are the songs of Dikshitar. Do you also come from Tiruvarur?" The Sishya of Dikshitar replied "This is my Guru. He is that Dikshitar who composed those kirtanas." At this, the Archakas and the worshippers who had assembled, all prostrated before Dikshitar. Asked about the two musicians, they informed him that Chinnaswami had died, and that, out of sorrow, Baluswami had left for Rameswaram and that he had promised to return again after completing the pilgrimage. All of them pressed Dikshitar to stay on in Madurai and he did so, awaiting the return of his brother.

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[1] हालारूपक्षेत्रवेगवतीतटविहारम् ।

During his stay at Madurai, Dikshitar used to visit the temples daily and he has sung many kritis in praise of the Deities. On Sri Minakshi he has composed a group of eight songs in the eight Vibhakthis. Notable among these are the kritis "Madhuramba Samrakshatu" in Raga Devakriya "Madurambikaya" in Raga Atana, "Sri Minambikayah" in Raga Devagandhari, and "Sri Madhurambikayasthava" in Raga Begada. Madhurambam Bhaja Re" is in a rare Raga, Stavaraja.

Apart from these group songs, he had composed a number of songs on Sri Minakshi, of which the most famous are the kritis "Minakshi me mudam dehi" in Raga Gamakạkriya, "Mamava Minakshi" in Varali Raga, "Kadambari Priya yai" in Raga Mohana and "Sri Minakshi Gauri" in Raga Gauri.

There are many songs on Sundareswara. Among them special mention might be made of the kriti "Somasundareswaram" in Raga Shuddha Vasantha and of the song "Palaya mam Parvatisa" in Raga Kannada. Shuddha Vasanta is a rare Raga and this is the only piece in it. It is allied to Raga Kannada, and it requires profound knowledge and consummate skill to bring out their distinctive features. The composition of kritis in these two Ragas in the same group of Sundareswara songs is calculated to bring out in relief their distinctive features. Mention might also be made of another Apurva Raga, Sauvira, in which Dikshitar has composed a kriti "Sarasa Sauvira" on Pushpavaneswara, a shrine near Madurai. There are also kritis in popular ragas, such as "Sundareswaraya" in Sankarabharanam and "Halasyanatham" in Durbar.

After spending some months in Madurai, Dikshitar decided to go on a pilgrimage to Rameswaram, as that would also help him to ascertain the whereabouts of his brother. Leaving Madurai, he went to Alagarkoil, where there is a famous temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu, under the name of "Sundararaja". The kriti which Dikshitar has composed in praise of this Deity, "Sri Sundararajam" is one of his master-pieces. It is in Raga Ramakriya, (now called Kamavardhini) of which it presents a picture which is as full as it is satisfying. It contains references to the water-falls in the hills on which the temple is situated, called "Nupuraganga", and to the story of the sage Manduka, who performed "Tapas" there, and was blessed by the Lord. There are few shrines of note in South India, around which legends and stories have not grown up. It is one of the interesting features of the kritis of Dikshitar, that they enshrine these legends, and this makes for popular appeal. They can be said to be the pilgrims' Bible and are valuable as mines of information for research scholars.

Dikshitar then moved on to Rameswaram. There he composed a number of kritis of which "Ramanatham Bhaje ham" in Raga Ramakriya is the most popular. At Darbha-Sayanam, he sang the famous kirtana "Sri Raman Ravikulabdhi Somam". This is in a rare Raga called Narayana Goula and is easily the best kriti in that melody. While at Rameswaram, Dikshitar learned that a musician from Tiruvarur visited that place, that the Maharajah of Ettayyapuram who had come there on a pilgrimage liked his music so much that he took him away with him as his Samsthana Vidwan. Dikshitar concluded that it must be his brother, and started on a journey to that place.

On the way he halted at a place called Sattur. While worshipping at the shrine of Lord Venkateswara there, he heard "Prabandhams" in Tamil on Lord Krishna recited by Vaishnavaite Archakas, and that made a deep impression on him. Then he retired to an adjacent Chatram, and while resting there, he found that a number of Archakas had collected there, and were loudly discussing plans for attending a marriage in high quarters. Dikshitar asked them what it was all about. They said, "Don't you know, Sir, that the Maharajah of Ettayyapuram is celebrating the marriage of his Samsthana Sangita Vidwan day-after-tomorrow? We are going there. We will get princely Dakshina." Then Dikshitar asked, "What is the name of that Musician?" "He is some Dikshitar from Tiruvarur. That is all we know", they replied. "Is his name Baluswami Dikshitar?" asked Dikshitar. "Yes" said one of the Archakas, who asked, "How do you know it?" "I am his elder brother, and I want to go there", replied Dikshitar. "Sir, we will take you with us. Get ready, said the Archakas. Dikshitar was overjoyed at the turn that the events had taken, and ascribing it to the grace of Lord Venkateswara, sang His praise in kriti "Venkateswara Yadava Bhupathim Asraye ham" in Raga Megha-ranjani. Then he started on his journey to Ettayyapuram, in the company of the Archakas.

It was then mid-summer, and the heat was unbearable. The road to Ettayyapuram lay through regions which were parched up and dry and Dikshitar had no easy time of it when travelling on it. Feeling thirsty on the way, he asked his escorts to stop at the outskirts of a village, where there was a cluster of trees. Dikshitar alighted there, and sat under the shade of the trees. That garden belonged to a local chief, who felt honoured by the presence of the saintly personage, and paid his respects to him, and made arrangements to supply drinking water to him. When Dikshitar asked him as to why there was such scarcity of water, he said that there had been droughts in successive years, that the water sources had mostly become dried, and that the people were undergoing infinite hardship. Dikshitar was deeply touched and went immediately to a temple in that place and performed a special Puja, to propitiate the Devi, and sang the famous kriti "Anandamrithakarshini", in which he prayed, "O Devi ! You are so merciful. I am praying to Thee for good rains. Give rains forthwith. Give rains. Give rains."[1] When he finished the song, a miracle happened. In the clear and blue sky, clouds suddenly gathered, and there was such an outpour of rain as had seldom been witnessed.[2]

This song is in Raga Amritavarshini, which appears to have been a new melody invented by Muthuswami Dikshitar. No composition earlier than his is known in this Raga, nor is its Lakshana to be found anywhere. It has latterly become very popular and apart from a famous piece of Muthiah Bhagavatar, "Sudha Mayi" in this Raga, several songs have recently been set to this melody. It can rightly be said that just as Raga Hamsadhwani is the creation of Ramaswami Dikshitar, so is Raga Amrithavarshini, that of Muthuswami Dikshitar.

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[1] आनंदामृताकर्षिणि, अमृतवर्षिणि,
हरादिपूजिते शिवे भवानि ।
....
सानंदहृदयनिलये सदये,
सद्य : सुवृष्टिहेतवे त्वाम् ।
संततं चिन्तये अमृतेश्वरि
सलिलं वर्षय वर्षय ।।

[2] This anecdote is supported by local tradition as well as the family tradition (vide *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini*, Telugu edition, 1904, Ettayyapuram, Vol. II, page 1229).

After the rain had stopped, Dikshitar resumed his journey to Ettayyapuram. Some of the Archakas went there in advance and through them information was received by Baluswami Dikshitar, and the Maharajah of Ettayyapuram, that Muthuswami Dikshitar was coming over there. They were very much delighted, and the Maharajah made elaborate arrangements to meet him, along with Baluswami Dikshitar, near the entrance to the town. When Dikshitar arrived there, the Maharajah accorded him a grand reception and thereafter the two brothers retired to their residence. It was a touching scene when they met each other alone at home. They were happy to meet after a long lapse of time and were in sorrow over the demise of their brother Chinnaswami. Muthuswami Dikshitar was in raptures over the marriage of Baluswami and showered blessings on him. Baluswami related to him, that the Maharajah was a staunch Bhakta of Lord Subramania, an enlightened prince, well versed in Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil, a liberal patron of arts, and in particular of Music, and himself a composer of classical songs of great merit. "He is" added Baluswami, "a great admirer of your compositions."

After the marriage festivities were over, the Maharajah requested Muthuswami Dikshitar to settle down at Ettayyapuram, and bless him as his Guru. Apart from his daughter who was living at Tiruchirapalli, the only person in whom Dikshitar was intermitted was Baluswami Dikshitar, who had settled down at Ettayyapuram, and so he decided to live with him. He was also anxious to visit the kshetras in that region. So he told the Maharajah that he would gladly settle down at Ettayyapuram but that before doing so he would like to go to Tiruvarur and wind up his establishment there. The Maharajah was pleased and made all arrangements for his journey to Tiruvarur and back. Dikshitar went to Tiruvarur, spent some time there, and after taking leave of his friends and relatives, returned to Ettayyapuram and spent the rest of his life there.

During this period he travelled widely in the Southern region, visited the famous shrines there and composed kritis on them. To mention some of them, there is, some forty miles south of Ettayyapuram, a place called Tiruchendur, situated on the sea-shore. It is one of the six important kshetras associated with the worship of Lord Subrahmania. Sankaracharya had visited it, and sung the praise of the Lord in a well-known poem "Mayuradhirudham". Of the songs composed by Muthuswami Dikshitar on this kshetra, the best known is the kriti, "Sri Subrahmanyo Mam Rakshatu" in Raga Todi. It may be mentioned that in Tiruchendur the devotees are given Vibhuthi Prasadam enclosed within dried leaves and this is referred to in this song.[1] There is another well-known Subrahmania Swami temple at a place called Kankasaila (Kazhugumalai), some twenty-five miles west of Ettayyapuram. Dikshitar visited this shrine, and sang the praise of the Deity in a kriti "Subrahmanyena Rakshitoham" in Raga Shuddha Dhanyasi.

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[1] पत्रविभूतिप्रदाननिपुणः

There is in Tirunelveli, on the banks of the river Tamraparni, an ancient and famous Siva temple, in which the Lord bears the name of Salivateswara and the Devi is called Kantimathi. Among the kritis composed by Dikshitar on these Deities mention might be made of the piece "Sri Kanthimathim" in Raga Simharavam and "Salivatiswaram" in Devagandhari' The description of the shrine of the Devi as "standing on the banks of the shuddha Tamraparni" is noteworthy.[1] It is one of the remarkable qualities of the waters of the Tamraparni that they are clear as crystal, and it is to this that Dikshitar refers in the expression "Shuddha Tamraparni". In the kriti "Sri Lakshmi varaham" composed on the shrine of Sri Lakshmivaraham in Kallidaikurichi, Dikshitar describes it as "situated on the banks of the Tamraparni, which carries away ills of the body".[2] This again, is a reference to certain medicinal qualities which the mineral waters of the Tamraparni are said to possess, the word "Bhanga" in the original being a medical term describing paralysis and similar diseases. The family tradition is that Dikshitar knew also the vaidya sastra, and this is confirmed by the use of the word "Bhanga" in this kriti.

There is a hill called Sabari-Malai, popularly known as Sauri-Malai in the Western Ghats in this region, on which is situated a shrine dedicated to Lord Harihara-putra, popularly known as Shastha and as Aiyappan. The story is that this Deity was born of the union of

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[1] शुद्धताम्रपर्णीतटस्थिताम् ।

[2] भङ्गहरताम्रपर्णीतीरस्थम् ।

Vishnu and Siva, and is believed to be very powerful in the Kaliyuga. Dikshitar visited this shrine and sang the kriti "Harihara Putram" in Raga Vasantha in praise of it. Therein he describes the Deity as "casting splendour on the Pandya and Kerala countries".[1] This has reference to the fact that Shastha worship is very popular in the Southern region. In point of its musical qualities this piece ranks with the best of Dikshitar and is one of the very best in that Raga. "Sri Krishnam Bhaja Manasa" is a piece in Raga Todi, and it is on Lord Krishna described as "Lord of Guru-pavana-pura." That means "Guruvayur". Dikshitar might have therefore visited it. There are many more kritis in praise of the shrines in the South. It is not necessary to make an exhaustive enumeration of them. It is sufficient to say that the record of Dikshitar as a pilgrim extends from the shrines at Tiruchendur, and Sauri-Malai in the South to those at Khatmandu, and Badrinath in the North, and this gives him a unique place among the saint-composers of India.

It remains to relate the story of the last journey of Muthuswami Dikshitar. That took place in the month of Arpisi (Aswija) in 1834 on the Chathurdasi day preceding Dipavali. On that day Dikshitar woke up, as usual, in the early hours, and after going through Yogic practices, began taking his bath. He had then a vision of Sri Kasi Annapurneswari, and while he was gazing on it, it vanished. Immediately Dikshitar remembered what Chidambaranatha Yogi had said before the shrine of Annapurneswari at Kasi, "She will give you not merely food in this life but also Moksha after it." He felt that his end was near. Then he finished his bath and performed Navavarana Puja to the Devi, and sang the kriti "Ehi Annapurne," in Raga Punnagavarali.[1]

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[1] पाण्डयकेरलादिदेशप्रभाकरम् ।

After the Puja was over, Dikshitar moved on to the drawing room. There a distinguished visitor rushed to see him. It was the Maharajah of Ettayyapuram. It was unusual for the Maharajah to meet him at this hour, and he was visibly excited. What had happened was that the elephant called "Gangeya" on which the Maharajah used to ride got wild at dawn, and breaking loose, marched on to the cremation ground, where it stayed on. All efforts to bring it under control proved unsuccessful. When the Maharajah got information of this he got alarmed and feared that it forebode some calamity to him. So he hastened to see Muthuswami Dikshitar, and get his blessings. After relating to him what had happened, he prostrated before him, and said "You are my Guru. My mind is perturbed at what has happened. Kindly tell me whether any evil will befall me."

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[1] पल्लवी

राहि अन्नपूर्णे संनिधेहि, सदापूर्णे सुवर्णे ।

अनुपल्लवी

(मां) पाहि पंचाशद्वर्णे श्रियं
देही रक्तवर्णे अपर्णे ।

चरणम्

काशीक्षेत्रनिवासिनि
कमललोचन विशालिनि—
विश्वेशमनोल्लासिनि—जगदीश गुरुगुहपालिनि—
विद्रु मपाशिनि पुन्नागवरालि प्रकाशिनि
षट्त्रिंशततत्त्वविकासिनि सुवासिनि भक्तविश्वासिनि
चिदानंदविलासिनि ॥

Dikshitar sat in contemplation for a while, and said, "Maharajah, be assured. It betokens no evil to you."

"I am so happy", said the Maharajah.

" What about my Kingdom. Will there be any peril to it?"

"There is no peril to your Kingdom", assured Dikshitar.

"I am so happy. It is all your blessing my Guru." So saying, the Maharajah departed.

Then shortly thereafter the sishyas of Dikshitar assembled in the drawing room, and began to recite his kritis. Dikshitar told them "To-day is Chaturdasi, and it is a parva day, sacred to the Devi. Sing kirtanas on the Devi." The sishyas then began to sing "Minakshi me mudam dehi" in Raga Gamakakriya. When the song was finished, Dikshitar said, "It looks as if the Devi is going to break my bonds.[1] Sing this kirtana once more."

They did so, and while they were singing the words "Minalochani Pasamochani" in the Anupallavi, Dikshitar shuffled off his mortal coils. Shortly thereafter the elephant "Gangeya" calmed down, and of its own accord, left the cremation ground and returned to the stable.

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[1] This is reminiscent of the passage in the *Upanishad*.

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिः

छिद्यन्ते पापराशयः ।

क्षीयन्ते चास्मकर्माणि

तस्मिन्हष्टे परापरे ॥

The whole of Ettayyapuram was plunged in deep sorrow on hearing that Dikshitar had died. The Maharajah of Ettayyapuram was shocked at the news and, rushing to get a last sight of Dikshitar, he cried "When I saw you in the morning, you were all aglow with divine splendour (Tejas). I thought only about my welfare, and asked you about it, and found comfort in your assurance that no harm will come to me or to my Kingdom. But your loss is to me greater than the loss of my Kingdom. You are an avatara of Lord Karthikeya and verily you have now returned to your abode, on the eve of Skandashasti". On the order of the Maharajah, the body of Dikshitar was cremated at a place specially selected therefor, and a Samadhi was erected there. It has now become a place of pilgrimage to all lovers of art and of religion.

CHAPTER VII

HIS MUSIC

WE MAY now proceed to consider the music of the compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar. They number several hundreds, and consist mostly of kritis. There are, besides, at least 5 Ragamalikas and a Padavarnam and a Daru already referred to. The most outstanding feature of the compositions of Dikshitar is their richness in Raga-bhava. To fully appreciate this, it is necessary to remember that the concept of Raga lies at the very root of the Classical Music of India and it is this that distinguishes it from Western Music. Now what is a Raga? It is a melody, formed of certain well defined sound phrases (Swara Sancharas), which distinguish it from other melodies, formed of different Sancharas. Every Raga has thus a persona different from that of others, and indeed Ragas are classed as divine personalities. It should be noted in this connection that the bodies of Gods and Goddesses are conceived of as consisting of sound (*Nada*). In his kriti, "Nadatanum Anisam", Sri Tyagaraja says that he bows to Sankara "whose body is Nada".[1] Dikshitar often describes the Devi as having Nada as Her Rupa (form) and in the kriti "Vamsavathi Shivayuvathi" in Raga Vamsavathi he describes the Swaras and the 22 Sruthis as constituting the form of the Devi.[2] Now the featuring of the Raga forms, that is, Raga Alapana, has always been considered to be the highest form of art Music. Just as a devotee of a deity sings the praise of it by describing it from head to foot so does a musician portray the form of a Raga by appropriate Sancharas ranging from the Mandra to the Tara Sthayi. Thus there has grown up an elaborate code of Raga-Alapa, and a large body of technical compositions, Prabandhas, whose object is to elucidate Raga forms. The concept of Raga, as sound-picture, involves that *sahitya* (words) as such, has no place in it. That is why Raga-Alapa is merely an elaboration of Raga form in Akara sounds, and if occasionally Aksharas (syllables) such as Ta, Ra, Na, are used in it, that is only for the purpose of facilitating easy production of the sound phrases ; they are non-significant. Herein lies the fundamental distinction between Ragas and songs. While Ragas are constituted by sound-pictures (*Nada*), songs are made of words (*Sahitya*). Western Music has classical songs of the highest quality but it has, apart from scales, no melodies (Ragas) as such.

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[1] नादतनुमनिशं शङ्करं नमामि ।

[2] द्वाविंशश्रुतिस्वरस्वरूपिणि

If Ragas transcend words, then it is pertinent to ask how any question of Raga-Bhava arises in compositions, whose object is to inspire and express Bhakti-rasa through appropriate *Sahitya*—and that is what the kritis of the Classical Trinity are. To answer this, it is necessary to touch on the history of kritis in South Indian Music. Alongside Classical Music, which consisted mainly in Raga-Alapa, there has flowed all through the ages, a stream of music consisting of devotional songs. This is what is known as "Bhajan Music". Unlike folk-songs, Bhajana songs are set to Ragas and Talas of Classical Music, and fall in line with it. But as the object of Bhajana songs is to inculcate Bhakti, it is the words and their sense that are of primary importance and if the forms of Classical Music are adopted, it is only as a means of invigorating the rasa of the songs. In other words, Music is subordinate to the *Sahitya*. Consistently with this object, the melodies selected are appropriate to the sense of the songs, and are simple, and such as will not divert the mind away from the Bhakti rasa to the aesthetic beauties of the Raga. Thus the purpose, and the nature of the two types of Music, Classical and Bhajana are different, and in general the votaries of the two types are also different.

This was the position in South India until the 18th Century, when a development took place which practically revolutionised music. That is the emergence of the "kriti" of the present day. Its beginnings can be traced to Purandaradas, whose Gitas are technical compositions whose object was to teach students of Classical Music the Lakshanas of Ragas, and this was done by setting forth their characteristic Sancharas in Swaras. At the same time there was *Sahitya* corresponding to the Swara Prastharas and that was in praise of the Gods. Its object was to facilitate the learning of the Swara contents of the Gitas. Then we come to Venkatamakhi whose Lakshana Gitas are as elaborate as they are numerous, and here again, while the emphasis is on the Swara Sancharas, there is also corresponding *Sahitya*, which is always in praise of Gods. From this, the transition to the modern "Kritis" is natural and simple. The Swara Sancharas come to be dropped leaving only the *Sahitya* in praise of the Gods, and that was the old Gita in a new attire and that is "Kriti". This kind of compositions came into vogue in the 18th century and reached perfection at the hands of the Trinity. It has the advantage of combining in itself the features of both a Lakshana Gita, and a Bhajana song. The comparative emphasis laid on these two elements varied with each composer and with each song.

Now examining the kritis of Dikshitar in the light of the foregoing, we start with this that his compositions are all in praise of Gods, and Goddesses, and so Bhakti is one of the predominent elements. But as already explained, Dikshitar was an Adwaitin, and it was his fundamental belief that all the Deities are the manifestations of the One Creator, Para Brahma, which transcends all names and forms and the worship of these Deities (Sagunopasana) was only a step in the realisation of the Para Brahma within oneself. Thus Bhakti is controlled by Gnana and it is this that explains many of the features in the music of Dikshitar. When a composer is under the spell of emotion, he naturally selects Ragas appropriate to the emotion, and further uses only such Sancharas of the Raga as are suitable to the sense of the composition. In other words, the melody is subordinate to the emotion and the Raga delineation is subjective. But where intellect rules, and emotion is subordinate to it, as in the case of Dikshitar, neither the selection of the Raga nor its elaboration depends on the dictates of emotion. The composer will select a Raga according to his mood, and to the time when he composes. In elaborating it, he will have regard to the form of the Raga and give a full picture of it. In such a case, the delineation of the Raga will be objective. That is what we find in the kritis of Dikshitar. He was well versed in the Alapana Paddhati as laid down in the treatises on Music, and followed it in the elaboration of the kriti, which is modelled on Raga-Alapa, with its component parts, Akshiptika Ragavardhani and Vidari or Makarini. The picture of the Ragas presented in the kriti is as clear and precise as it is full. The Sancharas given are characteristic of the Raga and bring out its true face. They range from the Mandra to the Tara Sthayi and give a complete picture of it. If the composition is rendered in Akara omitting the *Sahitya* it can easily be mistaken for Raga Alapa in an epitome. The kriti can well be described as Raga Alapa, chiselled to fit in with Tala, and dressed in Sahitya. It is this that forms the chief attraction in the kritis of Dikshitar.

Like Tyagaraja, Dikshitar has handled quite a large number of ragas rare as well as well-known. In the popular and well-known ragas, he has composed a number of kritis bringing out the features of the raga in all its varied aspects. To take an example, Todi is one of the major ragas in which Tyagaraja has composed some 20 pieces. In this Raga, Dikshitar has composed several kritis in which the raga is fully elaborated. A notable feature of these kirtanas is that they give us a picture of the raga with eduppu (Akshithika) in different swaras. In the following table are set out some of the kirtanas with different eduppu (starting) swaras in the Pallavi:

Dakshayani	— Dhaivata	— (Mandra Sthayi)
Sri Subrahmanyo	— Gandhara	Madhyama Sthayi
Mahaganapathim	— Madhyama	
Palayamam	— Panchama	
Ramachandraya	— Dhaivata	
Kamalambike	— Nishadha	

These kritis present to us the raga from the different angles from which it can be viewed. At the same time, the picture is full and comprehensive. It is as if photos of a person are taken from different postures. In the same manner, Dikshitar has composed a number of kritis in ragas like Bhairavi, Kambodi, Sankarabharanam and Kalyani.

The same can be said of kritis in many other popular and well-known ragas, such as Saveri, Sahana, Atana, Ramakriya (Kamavardhini), Gamakakriya (Purva Kalyani), Saranga and the like.

There are several old ragas such as Mangalakaisiki Ghanta, Gopika Vasantha, Narayana Gaula, to mention a few, for which we have got to resort to the kirtanas of Dikshitar for Lakshanas. There are again many ragas which have been handled only by Dikshitar. Such for example, are Ragas Saranga Nata, Chhaya Goula, Poorvi, Padi, Mahuri, Shuddha Vasantha, Kumudakriya, Amrithavarshini and the like. In Dwijavanti the piece "Chetas Sri" of Dikshitar stands out in solitary splendour.

The handling of the Vivadi Melas by Dikshitar requires special mention. The mela scheme of Venkatamakhi is that a Raganga Raga (now called Mela Kartha Raga) must include all the Sapta Swaras and working on this principle, and taking into account the variations of the five Vikrthi Swaras, he posited that 72 combinations are possible and he called them all Raganga Ragas. In reaching this result, he took into account ragas in which both the varieties (Komala and Tivra) of the same Swara occurred and the adjacent note did not. He treated them also as mela ragas by giving to one of the two variants of the Swara the name of the adjacent note. Thus where the raga took both the Komala and Tivra Rishabha and the Gandhara was absent, he called the latter Shuddha Gandhara. So also when the raga took both the varieties of Gandhara (Sadharana and Antara) and there was no

Rishabha, he called Sadharana Gandhara as Shat-sruti Rishabam. Likewise, in the upper octave, when both the varieties of Dhaivata occurred in a Raga and no Nishada, the higher note was called Shuddha Nishada and so also when both the Nishadas (Kakali and Kaisiki) occurred in a raga and there was no Dhaivata, Kaisiki Nishada was called Shut-sruti Dhaivata. The melas which are formed by this process are known as Vivadi Melas for the reason that the combination of two adjacent notes must be unharmonious.

This scheme has come in for considerable criticism. It has been said that it is anomalous to call the same Swara by two different names. But the fact is that this is not the making of Venkatamakhi. For, some 300 years before him, the raga Nata had been classed as a mela with Shut-sruti Rishaba and likewise Varali as a mela with Shuddha Gandhara. These are ancient ragas and have been awarded a special place in the music of South India as Ghana Ragas. What Venkatamakhi did was only to carry to its logical conclusion the scheme which had been in existence prior to him. At the same time it should be mentioned that in conceiving of them as melas, Venkatamakhi had due regard to the true concept of a raga, which is that it should be melodious and pleasant to hear. He accordingly avoided all such combinations in the featuring of the ragas as would be unharmonious. The ragas would take Sampurna Prayogas only if they are capable of being rendered with "Gamakas" such as Jaru. Otherwise the discordant notes will be woven into the fabric of the Raga in Vakra Sancharas. Thus to take for an example, the first mela Kanakambari, the prayogas used by Venkatamakhi are sa ri ma ga ri sa and pa da sa ni da pa and not sa ri ga ma ga ri sa or pa da ni sa ni da pa. It was a post-Venkatamakhi grammarian who introduced the concept of Sampurna Prayogas even in the Vivadi melas, thus obliterating the distinction between scales and ragas. But Venkatamakhi, being an eminent Vainika, avoided these pitfalls and even when evolving a new system of Vivadi melas took particular care to preserve the character of Vivadi melas as melodies and not as scales. Now Muthuswami Dikshitar has composed kritis in all the 72 melas including Vivadi ones. Indeed in the kriti "Sringararasamanjarim" in Raga Rasamanjori (which is the 72nd Mela of Venkatamakhi) he describes Devi as "finding pleasure in the 72 Ragangas"[1]. In handling the Vivadi Melas Dikshitar scrupulously followed the lead of Venkatamakhi and avoided unharmonious Prayogas. By way of illustration, reference might be made to the song "Kanakambari Karunyamrita lahari" in Kanakambari (Mela No. 1); "Sri Dakshinamurthim" in Penadyuti (Mela No. 2); "Kalavathi Kamalanayuvathi" in Kalavathi (Mela 31) and "Bhakthavatsalam" in Vamsavathi (Mela 54).

Muthuswami Dikshitar used to sing to the accompaniment of Vina and was a Vainika and Gayaka. This fact is suggested in a well-known kriti of his, "Balagopala" in Raga Bhairavi, wherein he speaks of the Lord as praised by Guru-Gùha who was Vainika-Gayaka (Vainika Gayaka Guru-Guha nuta). To this combination of vocal and instrumental music, must be attributed some of the distinguishing features in the music of Muthuswami Dikshitar. His kirtanas are in slow measure (Vilambakala) with a few passages in Madhyamakala at the end. Now it is possible for a vocalist to command a speed which an instrumentalist might have difficulty in following, but it is undeniable that the beauty of ragas can best be brought out in slow measure. It is only in Vilambakala that the forms of the raga can be reproduced faithfully and in all its beauty. In quick tempo, many of the delicate shades of the ragas are likely to be lost, leaving only a general impression of the raga but when it is rendered in Vilambakala it is possible to reproduce all its features fully and truly. It is for this reason that Vilambakala is generally favoured as suitable for elucidation of raga forms and given an important place in Raga-Alapa. To his mastery on Vina must be attributed the adoption of Vilambakala and the richness of Raga-Bhava in the kritis of Dikshitar.

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[1] श्रङ्गाररसमंजरीं श्रीकामाक्षीं गौरीम् ।
श्रितजन कल्पवल्लरीं चिन्तयेऽहम् ।
द्विसप्तति रागाङ्गरागमोदिनीम् ॥

It may be noted that the Melas are called Raganga Ragas, in the terminology of Venkatamakhi.

Another outstanding quality in the kritis of Dikshitar is that they are rich with gamakas. Gamakas are graces which impart beauty to the songs and their number varies, according to different authorities, from ten to fifteen. It is Vina that is best suited to produce them, and indeed many of them have been evolved in playing on the Vina where it is possible to produce the delicate shades of the ragas. By reason of his mastery of the Vina, Dikshitar had a command of them and has enriched his songs with them. It is incontrovertible that there is no other composer of Carnatic Music, in whose compositions we can see such a wealth of Gamakas as that of Dikshitar.

Dikshitar was very particular that there should be harmonious blending of Music and *Sahitya* in the songs. It is not unusual to find a song in which, in the singing of the piece, the *Sahitya* gets distorted and deformed beyond recognition. In other words, the music and the *Sahitya* are mismatched. But in the songs of Dikshitar this never happens. In the rendering of his kritis the words come out clear and full-blown ; that is to say the music does not destroy the identity or the beauty of the *Sahitya.* In one of his famous verses Kalidasa praises Parvati and Parameswara as united like a word and its meaning.[1] Adapting it, it might be said that in the songs of Dikshitar *Sahitya* and Music are in unison like Parvati and Parameswara.

It has been already pointed out that Dikshitar acquired good knowledge of Hindustani Music while he was in Benaras and that it is to this that we owe the rendering by him of many ragas of the Hindustani system which had been assimilated in Carnatic Music, in all their original form and colour. Apart from this, even in the rendering of Ragas generally one can see the influence exerted by the Hindustani Music on his songs. Though Gamakas are common to both Hindustani and Carnatic systems, the former lays greater emphasis on some of them, as for example Jaru. The compositions of Dikshitar also give great prominence to this Gamaka. It may in general be said that certain Gamakas are very appropriate to Vilambakala music and so it is only to be expected that they would figure largely both in the Alapa of Hindustani Ragas, and in the compositions of Dikshitar. In the rendering of these "Gamakas" Dikshitar found in Hindustani Music much that was congenial to him.

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[1]. वागर्थाविव संपृक्तौ
वागर्थप्रतिपत्तये ।
जगतः पितरौ वंदे
पार्वती परमेश्वरौ ॥ (*Raghuvamsa 1-17*)

Turning next to Talas, the concept of Tala like that of Raga is one fundamental and peculiar to Indian Music. Yajnavalkya has it that "a person who knows how to play Vina and knows the Srutis and Jatis and *Talas* is set on the road to Moksha." This has been the accepted view all through and Tala has occupied an important place in both the Hindustani and Carnatic systems. It is not necessary to expatiate here on the intricacy of the Tala systems in Carnatic Music. It is sufficient to say that all the great composers have given a place of importance to it in their compositions. Dikshitar has composed a whole group of kritis on the basis of the Suladi Sapta Talas (Navagraha kritis) and this has been already mentioned.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SAHITYA AND ITS CONTENTS

THE SONGS of Dikshitar are mostly in Sanskrit. A few of them are what are known as "Manipravala" compositions, that is, their Sahitya is in several languages. Dikshitar had acquired mastery over Sanskrit by studying Kavyas, Alankaras and Vyakarana. He had also a good knowledge of Telugu, which has figured largely in Classical Carnatic Music. Tamil was his mother tongue. Dikshitar has used all these languages in his compositions. But it is Sanskrit that occupies the pride of place among them. There are several reasons for this. Every language has its own distinctive qualities. To a Tamilian, there could be no better medium for expression of emotion than Tamil. Telugu is soft and mellifluous, and has been rightly termed the "Italian of the East". That is why it has predominated in compositions in Carnatic Music. Sanskrit is rich in its sounds and is sonorous, and majestic. In the kritis of Dikshitar, the emphasis is more on the aesthetic excellence of the Raga Sancharas, than on emotion. It is therefore but fitting that he should have preferred Sanskrit as the vehicle of expression for his Music. If the portraits of the Ragas presented by Dikshitar are comprehensive and imposing, the Sahitya in which they are clothed is, in point of its tonal value, suggestive of the grand and the sublime.

There is another reason for his adopting Sanskrit as the language of the Sahitya. The songs are, all of them, in praise of Gods and Goddesses, and Namavalis, and

Stotras furnish good materials for the sahitya thereof. They are in Sanskrit and Dikshitar has freely drawn from them. Thus, to give a few illustrations, the description, "Ekanekakshari" in the song "Kanjadalayatakshi" is based on the expression "Ekanekaksharakrithi" in the Tri Sati ; the description "Sadachara-Pravarthi Kayai" in "Kadambari Priya yai" is word for word the same as in the Sahasranama. The expressions "Jata Juta makutam" in the kriti "Vinapusthakadharinim" and "Pranatha Jana Saubhagya Jananim" in the kriti "Mahishasura Mardanim" are taken from the verses in the Anandalahari. The Madhyamakala Sahitya in the kriti "Gauri Girirajakumari" in Raga Gauri is a reproduction of the verse "Sudha Sindhor madhye" in Anandalahari. Further, as stated already, Dikshitar was an Adwaitin, and as such there was place in his creed for both Saguna and Nirguna concepts of God. While on the one hand he attached great importance to the worship of deities in their different names and forms, on the other hand he always emphasised that they were all only manifestations of the Para Brahma which is above all names and forms. While he drew largely from the stotra literature for his Saguna description, it is to the Vedantic literature that he resorted for expressing the philosophic concepts of the Adwaita. How profound his knowledge of this literature was can be seen from many of his kritis. In the kriti "Tyagarajadanyam", the entire description of God is of a "Paramatma", "who is above the three gunas, who is of the form of Satya-Gnana-Ananda and who disillusions the mind of the misconception of dualism".[1] In one of the

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[1] सत्त्वरजस्तमोगुणातीतसत्यज्ञानानंदरूपिणे ।
द्वित्वादिभेदवर्धनपरमाद्वैतस्वात्मानंदरूपिणे ।

"Guru-Guha" kritis, he describes the Lord as "representing the oneness of Jiva in Himself," and, what is more, he refers to the "Jahadajagalakshana" as the basis[1]. This is advanced learning in Vedanta and Mimamsa.

Then there are kritis in which the main topic is the worship of the Devi in accordance with the Tantras. Such are the Navavarana kirtanas. As the Tantras are in Sanskrit, the Sahityas can properly be only in that language. It will thus be seen that the preference of Dikshitar to Sanskrit was due to the emphasis which he laid on the aesthetic side of the compositions, and on the nature of their contents, which largely covered grounds occupied by stotras, and by Vedantic and Tantric literature.

The criticism has sometimes been levelled against the kritis of Dikshitar that they are not of much poetic value. But this is to mistake the true function of poetry and of music. The purpose of poetry is to give us picture of man and of the world in different surroundings and situations, and that is done through words which are meaningful and suggestive. So it is the sense that is important. The object of Classical Music is to present pictures and when words are used in it, it is only for their tonal value. There may be good poetry, which may be ill suited to Music, and *vice-versa*. If a composer is also a poet, then of course the compositions will be valuable both as music and as poetry. But a great musical composition does not lose its character as such, by not being also a poem.

Another criticism made against the Sahitya of Dikshitar is that it has grammatical flaws. Here again it is have led to a certain amount of looseness in the forms of expression used in musical compositions, and that, in this respect, music composers have enjoyed a certain amount of latitude. Dikshitar had read Kaumudi (Vyakaran), and his Vibhakthi kritiṣ show that he had a good command of the language. But in the true tradition of composers he did take occasional liberties with grammar, if that became necessary for showing up the Music. But even this is very rare, and not much stress should be laid on it.

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[1] जहदजहल्लक्षणया जीवक्यात्मनो

How much importance Dikshitar attached to the tonal value of the Sahityas can be seen from various Alankaras which he has used in his compositions. Apart from Prasa and Anuprasa, which are used by all composers of Classical Music, Dikshitar is the only one who has made use of the Alankaras called "Gopuchcha" and "Srotovaha" in his kritis. In a "Gopuchcha" composition there is a gradual and steady. decrease of the syllables, while in "Srotovaha" it is the reverse. In the kriti "Tyagaraja Yoga Vaibhavam" in Raga Ananda Bhairavi we have both these Alankaras. Thus in the Pallavi the Sahitya runs as follows "Agarajayoga Vaibhavam—Raja yoga vaibhavam —yoga vaibhavam — Vaibhavam—Bhavam—vam". This is "Gopuchcha". In the Charana we have the following: "Sam-prakasam — Swarupa — prakasam—Tatwa Swarupa prakasam—Sakala tatwa Swarupa prakasam — Sivasakthiadi skala tatwa Swarupa prakasam". This is "Srotovaha". In these passages, the ebb and flow of the Sahityas are matched by the Raga and Tala Sancharas. These Alankaras are to be found in other kritis of Dikshitar also, as for example, "Srivaralakshmi" in Sriraga, and "Maye" in Tarangini.

Turning next to the contents of the kritis, this subject has been dealt with in the context of the several compositions already referred. To give a resume thereof, the kritis of Muthuswami Dikshitar are, most of them, in praise of the deities in temples all over the country and on all the deities. They are valuable as records of the local legends and anecdotes. There are compositions devoted to the worship of the Devi in the Tantric mode. Then there are songs intended to be sung in praise of the deities on special occasions, such as "Siddhi Vinayakam" in Raga Chamaran (now called Shanmukhapriya) on the worship of Lord Ganesa on the Vinayaka Chaturthi day and "Sri Varalakshmi" in Sri Raga on the worship of Lakshmi Devi on the "Varalakshmi Puja" day in the month of Sravana.

Our Sastras prescribe Karma, Bhakti and Gnana as the means by which we can attain salvation. There is a place for all of them in our life, and that is well illustrated by the life of Muthuswami Dikshitar. To the last, he was performing his daily Puja, and that enabled him to discipline his mind and turn it towards God. He was a Bhakta and it was his life-work to go on pilgrimage from one temple to another and sing praises of the deities. He was a Vedantin, who lived in the thoughts of the Upanishads, and in his mind's eye the Creator was present everywhere and in everything. In accordance with doctrines of Vedanta as propounded by Sankaracharya, he viewed the entire Prapancha as a creation of Maya, that it was illusory and that to realise God within oneself a person must conquer Maya by his Viveka. In one of his kirtanas "Maye" in Raga Tarangani he says "Maye leave me. Who are you to trouble me?". Dikshitar was a real "Gnani".

Dikshitar was a Saint. He was a Nadopasaka, whose soul found bliss in the abstract beauty of Raga forms. His compositions are unique in that they are cast in the Ragas both of the Carnatic and Hindustani systems. And when we find that these songs have been composed in the cultural language of India, Sanskrit, it can easily be seen that Dikshitar is an all-India composer. The Bi-centenary of his birth will take place in the month of Phalgun in the year 1975. That will be a proper occasion for musicians and men of culture all over India to honour the memory of a saint-composer, who was one of the greatest exponents of the culture of India.

SELECT COMPOSITIONS

Muthuswami Dikshitar had profound knowledge of several branches of learning such as Vedas, Vedanta, Yoga, Mantra Sastras, Astrology and Agamas and this is reflected in his compositions. To give the reader some idea of his vast learning, a few of his kritis, representative of different types, are given below with their English translation. The rendering in English is intended to be not so much literal as calculated to bring out the true spirit of the original.

1

The following is a kriti in praise of Lord Ganapathi. Dikshitar was well versed in the Agamas relating to Ganapathi and has composed more than 20 kritis on Him. This composition bears the impress of his knowledge, also of Vedanta and Yoga.

Sri Muladhara — *Raga* : Sri — *Tala* : Adi

Pallavi :
श्रीमूलाधारचक्रविनायक, अमूल्यवरप्रदायक ।
Anu-pallavi :
मूलाज्ञानशोकविनाशक, मूलकंद मुक्तिप्रदायक ।
Charanam :
सकलीकृतदेवादिदेव, शबलीकृतसर्वज्ञस्वभाव,

प्रकटीकृतवैखरीस्वभाव, पराभव प्रसिद्धगजग्रीव,
विकटषड्शतश्वासाधिकार, विचित्राकार भक्तोपकार,
अकलंक विभास्वर विघ्नेश्वर, हरगुरुगुहसोदर लम्बोदर ॥

Translation

Hail O! Vinayaka, who is seated in the Muladhara Chakra[1]. Priceless are the boons which you grant. You are the root cause from which the Universe has sprung. You destroy Primordial Ignorance[2], and sorrow and give salvation to devotees. You are the embodiment of all the Deities. You are Omniscient and You manifest the Vaikhari Sound[3]. O! Vikata, You control breaths numbering 600[4]. O! famous Elephant-faced God, your form is wonderful. You confer benefits on your devotees. O! Vighneswara, You are spotless and brilliant. O! Lambodara, You are the brother of Guru-Guha.

2

The following is one of the Guru-Guha or Tiruttani kritis and is the most popular among them. The Vedantic background of the piece is to be noted.

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[1] According to the Tantras there are 6 Chakras in the human body and they are known as Muladhara, Manipuraka, Swadhishthana, Anahatha, Vishuddhi and Ajna. Ganesa is described as presiding over the Muladhara Chakra.

[2] This is the Anadi-Avidya of Vedanta.

[3] Sound is divided into 4 categories: Para, Pashyanthi, Vaikhari and Madhyama. The Vaikhari is articulate sound and is used broadly as meaning speech.

[4] This is said to be the number of breaths pertaining to Muladhara Chakra.

Manasa Guru-Guha — *Raga*: Ananda Bhairavi — *Tala*: Rupaka

Pallavi :

मानस गुरुगुहरूपं भज रे रे, मायामयहृत्तापं त्यज रे रे ।

Anu-pallavi :

मानवजन्मनि संप्राप्ते सति, परमात्मनि निरतिशयसुखं व्रज रे रे ॥

Charanam :

सत्त्वगुणोपाधिसहितसदाशिवं, स्वाविद्यासमेतजीवोद्भवम् ।
तत्त्वंतामसयुतविश्ववैभवं, तारकेश्वरमानंदभैरवम् ।
नत्त्वा श्रीगुरुचरणं. कृत्वा नामस्मरणं,
जित्वा मोहावरणं मत्वा तदेकशरणम् ॥

Translation

O! Mind, think of the form of Guru-Guha and cast off all agonies of the mind which are of Maya. Having obtained (the blessing of) a human birth, seek to obtain eternal bliss in the Parabrahma. Guru-Guha is Lord Sadasiva, the embodiment of Sattvaguna[1]. All living beings are born of Him as the result of the impact of Avidya. This Universe with its Tamasaic qualities is again a manifestation of His greatness. He is the Anandabhairava who gives salvation. Prostrate before Him; engage in the contemplation of His name; conquer the veil of illusion and think of Him as your sole refuge.

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[1] Guna means the natural qualities possessed by all created beings and they are classed as Sattva (Goodness and Purity), Rajas (Energy and Activity) and Tamas (Darkness and Dullness).

3

The composition given on this page is one of the 9 Avarana kirtanas of Dikshitar. The Tantras prescribe special modes of worship of the Devi. In accordance therewith, Dikshitar wrote a group of eleven kritis on Devi Kamalamba. His mastery over Tantras and the Mantra sastras is seen at its best in these kritis.

Sri Kamalambikaya — *Raga* : Sankarabharanam — *Tala* : Rupaka

Pallavi :
श्रीकमलाम्बिकया कटाक्षितोऽहं, सच्चिदानद परिपूर्णब्रह्मास्मि ।
Anu-pallavi :
पाकशासनादिसकलदेवतासेवितया, पंकजासनादिपंचकृत्यकृद्भावितया,
शीकहरचतुरपदया, मूकमुख्य वाक्प्रदया,
कोकनदविजयपदया गुरुगुह तत्त्वपदया ॥
Charanam :
अनंगकुसुमाद्यष्टशक्त्याकारया, अरुणवर्णसंक्षोभणचक्रागारया,
अनंतकोटयडनायकशङ्करनायिकया, अष्टवर्गात्मकगुप्ततरया वरया,
अनंगाद्युपासितया, अष्टदलाब्जस्थितया,
धनुर्बाणधरकरया दयासुधासागरया ॥

Translation

Shri Kamalamba has cast Her gracious look on me, and I am the Brahmam enjoying full and eternal bliss. Indra and all the Devas do service to Her. Brahma and other Deities engaged in the Panchakritya[1] meditate on Her. Her very feet dispel all sorrows. She endowed the mute poet Muka with power of speech. Her feet are like blue lotus. She is the embodiment of the Mahavakya "Tatvamasi" (That Thou Art) taught by Lord Guru-Guha. Her form is of the 8 Sakthis, Anangakusuma and the rest[2]. She is enshrined in the Samkshobhana Chakra[3]. She is the consort of Sri Sankara, the Lord of the entire Universe. She is Gupta-Yogini manifested in the 8 Akshara groups[4]. She is worshipped by Ananga and others[5]. Her abode is the lotus with eight petals. She holds a bow and arrows in Her hands and She is an ocean of the nectar of mercy.

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[1] According to the Agamas, the function of the Deities are five-fold: Srishti (Creation), Sthithi (Sustenance, that is, protection), Laya (Destruction), Tirodhana (throwing a veil), and Anugraha (granting favour).

[2] According to the Tantras, the Devi manifests herself in the form of 8 Sakthis, called Ananga Kusuma, Ananga Mekhala, Ananga Madana, Anangamadanatura, Anangarekha, Anangankusa, Ananga Vegini, Ananga Malini.

[3] According to the Tantras, there are nine Chakras through which the worshipper has to pass before reaching the Devi. These Chakras are called Trailoka Mohana, Sarvasha, Samkshobhana, Sarva-saubhagya Dayaka, Sarvartha Sadhakha, Sarvarakshakara, Sarvarogahara, Sarva Siddhipradayaka and Sarvanandamaya.

[4] The consonants, 38 Aksharas in number, are divided into 8 groups, commencing respectively with ka, cha, ta, tha, pa, ya, sha and ha, and they are presided over by the Eight Shaktis stated above. They are called collectively Gupta Yogini.

[5] Twelve persons are said to be notable among the devotees of the Devi. They are, besides Ananga mentioned in the kriti, Manu, Chandra, Kubera, Lopamudra, Agastya, Agni, Surya, Indra, Skanda and Durvasas.

4

The kriti below is in praise of one of the shrines dedicated to Siva in the temple of Tiruvarur. It is one of the pieces in which the praise of the Lord is not personal (Saguna) but abstract (Nirguna), in terms of the doctrines of Vedanta, as propounded by Sankaracharya.

Anandeswarena — *Raga*: **Ananda Bhairavi** — *Tala*: **Triputa**

Pallavi :
आनंदेश्वरेण संरक्षितोऽहं, नित्यानंदरूपोऽस्यि, ब्रह्मानंद रूपोऽस्मि ।
Anu-pallavi :
ज्ञानप्रदानगुरुगुहरूपचिदानंद नाथस्वरूपप्रकाशेन ।
Charanam :
अवयवत्रयातीतेन नित्येन, अवस्थात्रय साक्षिणातिशुद्धेन,
भवपंचकोशव्यतिरिक्तेन बुद्धेन, शिवसच्चिदानंदरूपेण मुक्तेन,
श्रवणमनननिदिध्यासनसमाधिनिष्ठापरोक्षानुभवस्वमात्रावशेषित
प्रकाशमानमहेश्वरेण ।

Translation

Anandeswara has, in the form of Lord Subrahmanya who is the Guru imparting Gnana (spiritual knowledge), revealed His form to Chidanandanatha[1]. Protected by Him I am in a state of Eternal Bliss, in a state of Brahmananda. He is beyond the three bodies and is

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[1] This has reference to the experience of Dikshitar at Tiruttani.

Eternal[1]. He stands as the witness of the three states and is Pure[2]. He is above the five sheaths, and is enlightened[3]. His form is Eternal Bliss, and He is free. You must hear of Him, then think of Him and then meditate on Him. By concentrating your mind on Him, you will have the experience of realising Him within yourself.

5

There are numerous kritis of Dikshitar, which are devoted to the praise of the Deity as a personal God (Saguna worship). They draw very largely from the Puranas. The following one is on Lord Balakrishna and is based on the Bhagavata Purana.

Chethas Sri Balakrishnam — *Raga* : Jaya Jayawanti — *Tala* : Rupaka

Pallavi :
चेत : श्रीबालकृष्णं भज रे रे, चिन्तितार्थंप्रदचरणारविंदंमुकुन्दम् ।
Anu-pallavi :
नूतननीरदसदृश शरीरं नंदकिशोरं, पीतवसनधरं कम्बुकंधरम्,
पूतनादिसंहारं पुरुषोत्तमावतारं, शीतलहृदयविहारं श्रीरुक्मिणीदारम् ।।

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[1] According to our Sastras there are 3 kinds of bodies, Sthula (gross), Sukshma (subtle) and the Karana (causal).

[2] The three states are Jagrath (being awake), Svapna (dreaming), and Sushupthi (sleeping).

[3] The human soul is encased in 5 Sheaths (Koshas) known as Anna, Prana, Manas, Prajnana and Ananda. It attains its liberation when it frees itself from all these Koshas.

Charanam :

नवनीतगंधवाहवदनं मृदुगदनं, नलिनपत्रनयनं वटपत्रशयनं,
नवचम्पकनासिकं अतमीसुमभासकं, नतेन्द्रादि लोकपालकं मृगमदतिलकं,
नवतुलसीवनमालं, नारदादिमुनिजालं
कुवलयादिपरिपालं गुरुगुहनुत गोपालम् ॥

Translation

O mind ! worship Balakrishna whose feet are beautiful like lotus. He will grant your desires. The boy of Nandagopala, He is dark as a new cloud, and clad in yellow robes and has a conch-like neck. He destroyed Puthana, lifted the Mandaragiri and married Rukmini. He is the Avatara of Vishnu and dwells in the hearts of good men. His face carries the odour of butter and His words are soft. His eyes are like lotus petals and He rests on a fig leaf (Vata Patra). His nose is beautiful as a Champaka flower and He is bright as an Athasi flower and wears a Kasturi Tilakam. Indra and Lokapalas do obeisence to Him. He wears a garland of Tulasi and of flowers. Narada and other Munis attend on Him. He is the protector of the worlds and is the Gopala praised by Guru-Guha.

6

This is a piece in praise of Lakshmi Devi. The context in which it was composed has already been given. A notable feature of the kriti is that it is an adaptation, for popular use, of the Vedic Mantra called Sri Sukta. One of the remarkable contributions of Dikshitar to our culture is that he made the treasures contained in the Vedas available to the general public in Sanskrit songs.

Hiranmayim Lakshmim — *Raga* : Lalita — *Tala* : Rupaka

Pallavi :
हिरण्मयीं लक्ष्मीं सदा भजामि, हीनमानवाश्रयं त्यजामि ।
Anu-pallavi :
स्थिरतरसंपत्प्रदां क्षीराम्बुधितनयाम्, हरिवक्षः स्थलालयां हरिणीं चरण किसलयां, करकमलधृतकुवलयां, मरकतमणिमयवलयाम् ।
Charanam :
श्वेतद्वीपवासिनीं श्रीकमलाम्बिकां परां, भूतभव्यविलासिनीं
भूसुरपूजितां वरां, मातरमब्जमालिनीं माणिक्याभरणधरां, संगीत वाद्य
विनोदिनीं गिरिजाप्तामिन्दिराम्, शीत किरणनिभवदनां,
श्रितचिंतामणिसदनां, पीतवसनां गुरुगुहमातुलकान्तां ललिताम् ।

Translation

I shall always pray to Lakshmi Devi and avoid going to small men. She will grant me imperishable wealth. She was born of the nectar ocean and dwells on the breast of Lord Hari and Her feet are tender as sprouts. She holds in Her beautiful hands the Kuvalaya flower and wears bangles of emerald. Sri Kamala Devi resides in the Shwetadwipa and is supreme. The entire universe is her sport and She is adored by Brahmins. She wears a garland of lotus flowers and jewels of ruby. She is Indira, the friend of Girija. Her face is like a moon and She is a veritable Chintamani granting the boons of Her devotees. She is wife of the uncle of Guru-Guha, and is clad in yellow robes and is charming.

7

Dikshitar was very learned in Astrology and this is fully seen in the kirtanas which he has composed in praise of the 9 Planets. They are popularly knows as Navagraha Kirtanas. The following kriti is on Brihaspathi, Jupiter. The context in which it was composed has already been given.

Brihaspathe — *Raga* : Atana — *Tala* : Triputa

Pallavi :
बृहस्पते तारापते, ब्रह्मजाते नमोऽस्तु ते ।
Anu-pallavi :
महाबल विभो गीष्पते, मंजुधनुर्मीनाधिपते, महेन्द्राद्युपासिताकृते,
माधवादिविनुतधीमते ।
Charanam :
सुराचार्यं वर्यं, वज्रधर, शुभलक्षण जगत्रयगुरो, जरादिवर्जिताक्रोध
कचजनकाश्रितजनकल्पतरो, पुरारिगुरुगुहसंमोदित पुत्रकारक दीनबन्धो,
परादिचत्वारिवाक्स्वरूपप्रकाशक दयासिंधो, निरामयायनीतिकर्त्रे
निरंकुशाय विश्वभर्त्रे, निरंजनाय भुवनभोक्त्रे, निरंशाय सुखप्रदांत्रे ।।

Translation

O! Brihaspati, husband of Tara, O! Brahman, I bow to You. O! powerful Lord of speech and ruler of Dhanus and Mina Rasis, You are adored by Mahendra and praised for your intellect by Madhava and others. O! Great Acharya of the Devas You carry Vajrayudha (Thunderbolt). O! Guru of the three Worlds, your name is auspicious. You are free from old age and from anger. O! Father of Kacha, You are the Kalpatharu granting the boons of your devotees. You are the delight of Guru-Guha the preceptor of Siva. O! Friend of the helpless, You grant progeny and illumine the 4 kinds of speech, Para and the rest. You are an ocean of mercy. You are faultless and You have laid down the Law (*Niti*). You are the Lord of the World and free from all controls. You are spotless and enjoy the world. You are full and perfect and You confer happiness.

8

Dikshitar worshipped knowledge for its own sake, and it is therefore not surprising that he should have written a number of kritis in praise of Saraswati. In this respect he stands alone among the classical Trinity. One of these pieces is given below:

Vina-pustakadharinim — *Raga* : Vegavahini —
***Tala* : Jhampa**

Pallavi :

वीणा पुस्तकधारिणीमाश्रये, वेगवाहिनीं वाणीमाश्रये ।

Anu-pallavi :

एणाङ्कयुतजटाजूटमकुटांतां, एंकाग्रचित्त निद्योतां विधिकान्ताम् ।

Charanam :

पराद्यखिलशब्दस्वरूपावकाशां, पौर्णमी चन्द्रिका धवल संकाशां, करारंविदां कल्याणदां भाषां, कनक चम्पक दामभूषाविशेषां, निरंतरं भक्तजिह्वाग्रवासां, निखिल प्रपंच संकोचविकासां, नराधमाननविलोकशोकापहां पूजितविग्रहाम् ॥

Translation

I worship Vani who holds a Vina in one hand, and a book in another, and who surges with force[1]. She is the consort of Brahma. On her hair, there is the moon, and on that a crown. It is only persons who can concentrate their mind that can contemplate Her. She is the source of all sound, Para and the rest. She is pure-white like the moon-light on the Purnima day. Her arms are beautiful like a lotus. She is Bhasha (speech) who grants good things. She wears a garland of Golden Champaka flowers. She is at the tip of the tongue of devotees who worship Her ceaselessly. She causes the entire universe to contract, and to expand. She effaces the sorrow of having to look at the face of low men. She is worshipped by Vishnu, Hara and Guru-Guha.

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[1] The Sanskrit word in the original is Vegavahini, which is the name of the Raga, and also means vigorous flow, in the context, of words.

GLOSSARY

1. Akshiptika

This is a technical term relating to Raga Alapa, that is elaboration of Ragas. The treatises dealing with this topic divide the process of Alapa Paddhati into 3 parts—Akshiptika, (giving an outline of the Raga), Raga Vardhani (elaboration of the Raga) and Vidari or Makarani (the finale). Sometimes the word Akshiptika is also used to denote a Swara on which a song commences, the usually accepted term being Grahaswara.

2. Akshara

Akshara is a syllable used in a melody. In Tala it means a unit of time measure.

3. Alapa

See **Akshiptika**

4. Arangetral

This is a South Indian word meaning the giving of the first formal recital given by a student after completing the studies. It is generally confined to Bharata Natya or Dance.

5. Anupallavi

A kriti in Carnatic Music consists generally of 3 parts. There is the opening passage called Pallavi. The passages which elaborate the Raga sancharas and forming the concluding portion of the piece is called Charanam. In between the two, there is what is called the Anu-pallavi giving some phases of the Raga. While most pieces contain this, there are some kritis which consist only of Pallavi and Charanam.

6. Arohana

The Lakshana of Raga means the definition of its form and contents. It chiefly consists in giving the Swaras (notes) which a Raga takes in its ascent and its descent. The Swaras in ascent are known as Arohanam and those in descent as Avarohanam. But to understand the true form of the Raga, it is not sufficient merely to know the Swaras. We must look to other factors to give a true and full picture of a Raga. Such for example are the characteristic phrases of the Raga (Sancharas) and Gamakas which are so to say ornaments which add to the grace of the Raga. The treatises on music give an elaborate account of the various kinds of Gamakas. Traditionally they are supposed to be ten. But the number has been increasing and it is said that there are fifteen varieties of them.

7. Avarohanam

See **Arohanam**

8. Bharata Natya

Bharata Natya is a dance. It is highly developed in Carnatic Music and consists of several items such as Alarippu, Sabdam, Varnam besides Abhinaya (gestures)..

9. Daru

This is a technical kind of composition largely used in Bharata Natya and in operas.

10. Ghana Ragas

"Ghana" is the name given to a particular mode of Raga elaboration. It consists in taking a group of 3 or 4 adjacent notes and giving a number of Sancharas within that group. In this manner the entire range of the Raga, from the Mandra to the Tara Sthayi is covered. Certain Ragas have from time immemorial been regarded as eminently suited for this exercise. They are called Ghana Ragas. Such for example are Nata, Gaula, Arabhi, Varali and Sri.

11. Gitas

These are technical compositions in which Ragas are defined in terms of Swaras and characteristic Sancharas. According to the system of musical education in Carnatic Music, the students are first taught Swaravalis in a variety of aspects, and then Gitas.

12. Kriti

Kriti means literally a composition. It has latterly come to be used to denote all technical compositions as well as songs composed in praise of the Deities. These later are popularly known as kirtanams.

13. Lakshana Gitas

Lakshana Gita is the name given to the Gitas which Venkatamakhi wrote in his expositions of the 72 Melas.

It gives us the name of the mela; the Swaras which it takes and the Janya Ragas which are to be grouped under it.

14. Manipravala

In South India a practice has grown up of using in the same compositions more than one language. Dikshitar has 3 or 4 compositions of this kind in which the languages used are Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil. This type of composition has come to be known as Manipravala, the suggestion being that the song resembles a Garland in which Gems (Mani) and Pearls (Pravala) are woven together.

15. Mela Ragas

Ragas in which all the 7 notes occur are known as Mela Ragas. If all the 7 notes can be taken in succession it is said to be Sampurna. But where all the 7 notes are taken but not in succession it is called Vakra Sampurna. But one or more Swaras may be absent in a Raga and that is known as a Janya Raga and it will be classed under that mela which will be appropriate for the notes which actually occur in it. When two notes stand in harmonious relationship to each other they are called Vadi Samvadi Swaras. But when the combinations are discordant as in the case of certain adjacent notes they are called Vadi Vivadi Swaras. Where in a mela, the adjacent Swaras are Vadi Vivadi notes, it is called a Vivadi mela.

16. Mudra

The practice among the composers of kritis has been to indicate their authorship of the same by mentioning either their own name or any other name adopted for this purpose. This is called Mudra. Thus Tyagaraja used his own name as Mudra while Dikshitar used "Guru Guha" as his Mudra.

17. Prabandhas

These are technical compositions and there are several kinds of them mentioned in our treatises. In Tamil literature the hymns composed by Vaishnavaite Saints in praise of the Lord are called "Prabandhams".

18. Raga Malika

When a composition consists of several parts and each part is set to a different Raga it is called Ragamalika.

19. Raga Tala Malika

When a composition consists of several parts and each one of them is set to a different Raga and Tala it is called Ragatalamalika. The classical example of this is the 18 Ragatalamalika of Ramaswami Dikshitar.

20. Sahitya

Sahitya means the words in a composition as distinguished from its melody.

21. Sthayi

Sthayi means an octave consisting of all of the 7 notes. The lowest of the Octaves is called Mandra. The next above it, is Madhyama and the top most is the Tara.

22. Suladi Sapta Talas

In Carnatic Music the main and fundamental talas are 7 in number—Dhruva, Matya, Rupaka, Jampa, Triputa, Ata and Eka. Suladi compositions are exercises designed to give training in all the talas.

23. Swaras

Swara means a musical note. There are, according to our Shastra, seven notes in an octave. Of these two are invariable and are called Prakriti Swaras. They are Shadja and Panchama. The other five notes are variables and are called Vikriti Swaras. Our Shastras recognise broadly two variations of these swaras. They are called Komala and Tivra in Hindustani Music. In Carnatic Music, Komala Rishabha is known as Shuddha Rishabha and Komala Dhaivata as Shuddha Dhaivata. Komala Gandhara is known as Sadharana Gandhara and Tivra Gandhara as Antara Gandhara. Komala Madhyama is known as Shuddha Madhyama and Tivra Madhyama, as Pratimadhyama. Komala Nishada is known as Kaisika Nishada and Tivra Nishada as Kakali Nishada.

24. Varnams

These are technical compositions and they are divided into two categories—Chowka Varnams and Pada Varnams. Chowka Varnams are reckoned as the highest form of a technical composition giving alike characteristic Raga Sancharas and intricate Tala phrases. Pada Varnams are intended primarily to be rendered in dance recitals.

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